

A CATECHISM IN COMMUNITY
FOR THE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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To my Mom, who showed me how to
live as a follower of Jesus.

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ABSTRACT

The United Methodist Church has been experiencing a significant decline in membership in the United States and Europe in the 21st century. *A Catechesis in Community* outlines a method to assist local churches that are struggling to find their place in post-modern society. Youth and church administrators were surveyed concerning their personal beliefs, perception of the Church's inclusion of young people, spiritual formation and Christian education within the Church. A brief survey of Christianity and the roots of Methodism remind the Church of today where they came from and John Wesley's admonition to 'make Christians'.

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM AND SETTING

This thesis project is the result of my experiences as a lifelong in United Methodist. I was baptized as an infant and grew up in a family that was very active in our local church. Mom was the Sunday School Superintendent for most of my childhood, and had a very deep abiding faith. My Dad was a trustee and regular worker at church suppers, but he had no real faith at that point in his life; he was active on the periphery with committees and activities, but never attended church services. The rest of the family attended worship regularly and socialized with other members of our congregation.

I followed the typical Methodist path in that I became a member of my church as a sixth grader. I continued to participate in church and related activities throughout my teenage years. I began teaching Sunday School when I entered High School, as there was no class for youth in that age group and my mother was determined to keep me involved. I became the Sunday School Superintendent and Youth Group Leader by the time I was twenty-one years old. The Sunday School and Youth Ministry programs were deemed successful by all, as the number of children involved grew each year, and programs flourished within both ministries; but after a few years, I began to feel that something was missing.

There were over a hundred children and youth participating in weekly classes and programs. The Pastor, parents and congregation were all thrilled with the musicals, cookie bakes and parties, but I kept feeling that insidious nagging feeling in the back of

my mind saying that something was missing. I couldn't put my finger on it, but I knew that things were not as perfect as they seemed.

There had been some major changes in my personal life by this point. My mother and sister had both died of cancer, and my niece had been forbidden to see my Dad and I, as we were no longer considered 'family' by her father. My belief in God had undergone a transformation as well. Even though I attended church and had held vital leadership positions, no one had ever asked me if I believed in God or if I had committed my life to Him. If they had, hopefully, they would have never allowed me positions of such influence, as I did not consider God to be anything more than a myth until I was in my mid-twenties. I met God face to face while my mother was comatose in the hospital two days before she died. The problem was I had no idea that it was God until a few years later, as I had no one to help me understand once my mother died. I actually had a member of my congregation ask: "what are you doing here" when I showed up for a Maundy Thursday church service the evening my mother died.

This is not to say that there were not devoted Christians in my congregation nor my nuclear family. But now, as I near fifty, I can look back with some clarity and acknowledge that no one ever challenged me to grow in faith at my church. I was loved and part of a community, but my spiritual life was completely neglected. There were a few people who tried to guide me, but I was able to ignore them and was never really shepherded in the faith. I am sure, had it not been for my mother and her modeling such a Godly life, I would have fallen away from the church completely after her death. When I finally accepted Christ as my personal Savior and allowed God the opportunity to work in my life, I resolved that my calling in life was to help prepare others so they would

never have to face such obstacles without God's presence and a saving faith in Christ. I finally determined that's what was missing in all of the years of Sunday School and church; the Church was not teaching youth about God's personal loving presence, guidance and peace; nor were we preparing families to teach their children how to live a life in ministry. Nowhere in any of the programs, games, activities, events or even worship were we showing children and youth that God is present in their lives and that worship was more than the one hour a week they spent in the church building. We were not teaching anyone to look for God's presence in their daily lives, to expect miracles or to understand that everything we have is thanks to God. They were not learning that everything they do every minute of every day is a reflection of God's very presence in their lives. We were not only failing the children and youth in our church, we were also failing the families. There were no educational programs to help families teach their children the importance of God in their lives. In my mind, the educational programs in the church, for both youth and adults, were (and still are) not really teaching anything of substance. In their book, Dr. Gary Parrett and J. I. Packer discuss the importance of a solid catechesis in the church. They ask the question, "is your [the] church's ministry one of grounding and growing God's people in the Gospel and it's implications for doctrine, devotions, duty and delight? This catechetical model will 'develop' a foundation for faith development throughout our life."¹ The United Methodist Church did [does] not have a deliberate, developed catechetical model. Instead of meaningful teaching, we were and still are filling the void with programs and activities bereft of any real significance. The only thing we were doing correctly was creating a safe, loving

¹ J.I and Gary A. Parrett Packer, *Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010). 314.

community for the families and neighborhood.

That's where this project begins, nearly twenty-five years ago as I embarked on a journey to find the answer to that persistent nagging voice telling me that something was missing. I now believe that 'something' is a holistic catechesis, which will guide children and youth as they grow in their faith and sustain adults as part of God's community of faith. This teaching/training program will be built layer by layer building upon a strong Biblical foundation. It cannot be done in an hour Sunday mornings, at weekly pizza party gatherings or even yearly mission trips. While all of those things certainly supplement the teaching and training of children, the primary form of teaching must be in the home with the family, while remaining part of a community of believers.

Just as important in this holistic catechetical model is the continuing education of adults. As United Methodists, we will do well to remember the process of sanctification, or Christian perfection, begins when we are justified, that is to say, made right with God. But it doesn't end there. The process of perfection lasts a lifetime, cleansing away all sin with God's gradual work on the soul. In other words, we don't stop learning and growing when we graduate from high school or college. "Spiritual formation", according to Dallas Willard:

in the Christian tradition is a process of increasingly being possessed and permeated by such character traits as we walk in the easy yolk of discipleship with Jesus our teacher. From the inward character of the deeds of love then naturally but supernaturally and transparently flow. Of course there will always be room for improvement, so we need not worry that we will become perfect at least for a few weeks or months. Our aim is to be pervasively possessed by Jesus through constant companionship with him. Like our brother Paul, 'This one thing I do:...I press on toward the goal!...That I may know Christ!' (Philippians 3:13-14, 8)" Living as a disciple is a lifetime commitment!²

² Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (New York: HarperOne, 2006). 391-407; 3562.

The seriousness of this commitment was not lost on John Wesley. He and his brother Charles were so frustrated with the complacency and seeming deadness of the Anglican Church, they started a holiness club. John was so methodical with his study that people dubbed him a ‘methodist’ as an insult.

In his book *Repenting of Religion*, Gregory Boyd states “The New Testament is not about ethical behavior, it is about a radical new way of living”³. That radical way of living is exactly what John Wesley embodied as he and his brother Charles “launched a movement of renewal (known as the Methodist or Evangelical revival) that breathed new life into their beloved Church of England”⁴. This lifestyle is what must be conveyed to every member of the United Methodist Church in order to staunch the dramatic loss of members; especially it’s younger members. What must be understood is that this radical way of living is 24 hours a day, seven days a week, not just an hour on Sunday morning. Church just doesn’t seem to be working today, especially for youth and young adults. Church isn’t attracting young people. We are no longer living in a society where everyone goes to church on Sunday morning ‘because it’s the thing to do’. And equally as important, even if they do attend church, youth don’t just *believe* what adults tell them. Youth today want to experience everything for themselves. And while experiencing God doesn’t sound like a problem, how can we get children and youth to experience God in one hour a week? Think about it, we are forcing them to sit quietly and reverently in a sanctuary that smells like the air hasn’t been changed since 1902, listen to music composed before their parents were born and endure a lecture about a Biblical passage

³ Gregory Boyd, *Repenting of Religion: Turning from Judgement to the Love of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 82.

⁴ Paul Wesley Chilcote, *Recapturing the Wesley's Vision* (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 15.

they have probably never heard of. There are some churches that have their children and youth participate in a children's sermon, or sing a song for the congregation from time to time, but how many congregations are actively and deliberately facilitating their children's growth into disciples of Christ? As a United Methodist, I dare say not many.

It is an interesting and ironic juxtaposition, that in the age of the social networking frenzy, the church also needs to be teaching its members how to *live* in community. Dr. Parret and Dr Packer describe catechetical instruction as "highly relational and interactive"⁵ People, especially our youth and young adults, spend so much time in front of their computers, that they are losing or not developing social skills. Family dinnertime has been replaced by carpooling to events, working late and eating in front of the computer. Teens consider their avatar friends to be a support network and will send text messages rather than pick up their cell phone and actually speak to someone. In a recent report on MSNBC, one teen is quoted as saying: "And texting takes a lot longer to say what you want to, so if you are texting someone for a while, you are like, 'Oh, man, we've been texting for like two hours,' when in reality if you were having like a conversation, it would be like a 10-minute conversation. So you feel like it is a more in-depth conversation than it really is. It's kind of like a false sense of communication I guess."⁶ That 'false sense of commitment' has become an insidious message in the minds of our youth, convincing them they are forming lasting, nurturing relationships when in reality they are feeling more alone than any other time in history. Feeling alone isn't the

⁵ J.I and Gary A. Parrett Packer, *Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010). 331.

⁶ Suzanne Choney, "Just as you thought: More teens are Texting," *msnbc.com*, 04 10, 2010, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/36650790/ns/technology_and_science-wireless/ (accessed May 03, 2010).

only consequence of our youth's 'plugged in' lifestyle. Teachers are reporting that as youth "are increasingly immersed in texting, they also find them increasingly shy and awkward in person."⁷ How can we teach our children and youth about relational and interactive faith in God when they lack the social skills to relate with each other? As a Church, it is imperative that we examine how this change in social media and networking is affecting the youth and families in our congregations and communities.

The statistics gathered by the General Council on Finance and Administration of the United Methodist Church paint a dismal if not frightening picture for the future. "Today the United Methodist presence in the U.S. is back where it was around 1820⁸." Lovett Weems, in his response to the State of the Church report prepared for the 2007 General Conference, said that "today the United Methodist Church is older and less diverse than the general population of the United States."⁹ "At one point in the history of the United States, one in four persons was a "Methodist." Today it is one in 400. "¹⁰ In 2007, there were more professing United Methodists in West Africa than there were in the Northeastern United States¹¹. At its zenith, the United Methodist Church met the people where they were, and it was successful. Pastors travelled west when the frontier was being settled and the Church grew with the people as they became more prosperous.

⁷ Jennifer Ludden, "Teen Texting Soars; Will Social Skills Suffer?," *NPR*, May 10, 2010, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=126117811&ps=cprs> (accessed May 11, 2010).

⁸ Lovett Weems, Jr, "Ten Provocative Questions Inspired by the 2007 State of the Church Address," *UMC.org*, 2007, http://www.umc.org/atf/cf/{db6a45e4-c446-4248-82c8-e131b6424741}/SOTC_WEEMS_REPORT.PDF (accessed August 20, 2009).

⁹ Weems, "Ten Provocative Questions Inspired by the 2007 State of the Church Address".

¹⁰ Weems, "Ten Provocative Questions Inspired by the 2007 State of the Church Address".

¹¹ General Council on Finance and Administration of the United Methodist Church, "This is Our Story," research@gcfa.org, <http://www.gcfa.org/> (accessed October 23, 2009).

According to Weems however, the success itself has led to a stagnation of practices, which has eventually led to the church as a whole becoming stagnant itself.

In 1995, the United Methodist Church in the United States had 8,493,467 professing members. That number had dropped 5.86% to 7,995,429 members in 2005. The numbers are even more disturbing in New England. In 1997 the New England Conference reported a membership of 112,119 people; by 2007, that number had diminished 20.27% to 89,393 members.

Statistics on children and youth attendance in the United Methodist Church are difficult to quantify. All statistics are submitted by the Pastor of the church and can at times be skewed by ‘over-zealous’ reporting. Often times churches report the number of children ‘on the rolls’ of Sunday School, rather than those attending each week. The same problem can be identified with youth ministry reports. One need only attend a United Methodist Church on Sunday morning to see that children and youth are disappearing from the churches at an even more alarming rate than adults. In the New England conference, the number of youth attending Sunday School on any given Sunday has dropped to an average of a mere 2860 in 2007¹². The New England Conference has 559 churches, hence are averaging 5.12 youth on a Sunday morning. Lovett Weems reports: “The failure to reach younger people is abundantly clear in the State of the Church report. It is painful to read that clergy seem less concerned about this than laity are, and that laity want younger people but are not willing to change their worship or budgets to reach younger generations. The report is clear that the gap between rhetoric and action appears to be as large as the age gap that some believe threatens the future

¹² Data provided by the General Board of Discipleship: 1997-2007.

viability of the denomination”¹³. While there is a problem throughout the whole denomination, this report deals primarily with the Northeastern corner of the United States. We, as a church need to discern the issue(s) and be ready to respond, before it is too late. What are the issues? Why are young people so disinterested in the church?

Let’s begin by looking at society in general. It is an interesting world our children are growing up in: school shootings, church attendance at an all time low, little or no trust in leadership or those sworn to protect us, social networking is done via computer and playing games with a bunch of friends entails sitting alone in front of your TV talking into a headset. Gone are the days when kids got home from school and played outside somewhere in the neighborhood until dinner and your next door neighbor would not only yell at you for riding your bicycle down the middle of the street, but would call your parents so they could yell at you for it when you got home too! Kids no longer get up on a beautiful summer morning and leave the house to ‘go out and play’ and stay out in and around the neighborhood until dark; parents think it’s too dangerous. In the sixties and seventies, most moms in the neighborhood were home during the day, and they would call each other so everyone knew where all the kids were all day long. That just doesn’t happen today. Neighbors don’t know each other, both parent are working to make ends meet and people don’t want to ‘get involved’ for fear of retaliation or litigation.

Technology has made life better; a ‘flattened world’¹⁴ now holds us responsible for our neighbors in Africa or China, and has made us more accepting of diversity. Yet, along with such wonderful technological advances, comes kids bullying other kids via the

¹³ Weems, "Ten Provocative Questions Inspired by the 2007 State of the Church Address".

¹⁴ Thomas Freidman, *The World Is Flat 3.0: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century* (New York Farrar Strauss & Giroux, 2006).

internet, children sending naked pictures to each other over cell phones and teens posting pictures of themselves throwing up after a night partying on facebook.

Thirty years ago, kids were told they needed to work harder when they didn't do well on a test, or struck out at home plate. Now, adults work to convince children that they are the best; that they never fail at anything they try and that they are always the center of attention. Parents actually tell their children that it was the 'teacher's fault that they failed a test; after all, if the teacher was doing their job, the child would have learned the material'. Many young people have shifted their attitudes from a willingness to work to one of self-entitlement. A 17 year old young man posted the following comment on facebook after his first day at work: *J.S. took over \$900 from people today but only gets about \$40 of it....woo hoo (if there was a rolling the eyes smily I'd put it here)* An adult commented on his post and the young man followed up with: *haha, and that's with like 3 hours from Friday, so my running total for the week is about \$60 dollars without taxes, so really about \$45, for about 10 hours of work....woo hoo.* This young man is extremely respectful, doing well in school and takes great pains to mentor his younger brother, but he cannot understand why he only earns minimum wage for his time at work in a fast food restaurant. Surely his time is worth more than this!!

In the not so distant past, a nuclear family, an extended family and a church family were the norm. Additionally, there was a neighborhood full of people watching kids' every move. Today, kids are fortunate to have an intact nuclear family, and many, many children and teens are forced to turn to gangs for a surrogate family, and crime to supply their most basic needs. It is very difficult (nearly impossible) for a child to understand the meaning of a loving relationship with God if they do not have that with

their own family at home. Being a parent in the twenty first century is no picnic. Kids need their parents to listen to them, encourage them and point them in the right direction when they stray off course in life. Children and youth have always retreated into their rooms during their teen years, but today the problem may be exacerbated by parents forced to work so many hours a week that it limits their involvement in the child's life. Combine that with this generations' general mistrust of society, an overwhelming amount of un-vetted information readily at hand and an open door to literally anyone in the world through the internet and we have handed over the education of our children to the world at large.

In addition to the constant barrage of input from 24 hour news, iPods, cell phones, video games and social networking online, youth today also have to be culturally and socially diverse. At no time in the history of the world have the cultures been more intermixed and intertwined. It is wonderful to see all of God's children living together, but it is by no means peaceful all the time and can also be described as difficult, confusing and even destructive. Dennis McCallum writes: "Postmodern eclecticism, or combining different world views, may seem to ease the tensions of modern society. But in our need to solve the problems posed by cultural diversity, we miss the destructive potentials of post modernism."¹⁵ He continues saying: "Postmodernism may seem open-minded and tolerant on the surface, but with its denial of the individual and its fascination with power, the makings of manipulation are all present".¹⁶ Has postmodernism manipulated the youth of the generation to feel that they no longer need God, or has God

¹⁵ Dennis McCallum, *The Death of Truth* (Grand Rapids: Bethany House publishers, 1996), 156.

¹⁶ McCallum, "The Death of Truth", 158.

just been lost in the noise of an otherwise tumultuous world? Are youth so consumed with self that there is no room for a divine Creator in their lives?

If such an avalanche of narcissism isn't enough, add in the state of society and it's hard to imagine how youth today are able to even able fathom a loving, caring God. Rick McKinley writes: "Today our culture is inoculated to sin. We are surrounded by it every day; it is in our society and in us. We see it and think it's not a big deal. But it is a big deal. It is a matter of life and death"¹⁷ Sin, narcissism, power, multiculturalism, technology and the pressures of everyday living in the twenty-first century are all dangers youth must navigate as they try to make their way in the world. Even those issues cannot dominate the overarching zeitgeist that is post-modernism.

No one is able to pinpoint exactly when the shift from modernism to post-modernism began, but many call Friedrich Nietzsche the 'patron saint of post-modern philosophy'.¹⁸ Post modernism isn't a set of distinct doctrines or rules; it's more of a mood - a completely new way of analyzing ideas. Frederica Mathewes-Green likens postmodern society to a shopping mall filled with ideas, from which people feel free to pick and choose the ideas they like and what they want to believe. Post-moderns employ that same form of analysis each time we speak to them about God, religion, or how long it should take to get lunch in a line at McDonald's. Young people do not feel they should respect someone just because their older or in a presumed position of power. They don't respect someone because they are a teacher; they feel the teacher has to earn their respect. Post-moderns definitely don't believe in God because their parents do, they have to

¹⁷ Rick McKinley, *Jesus in the Margins: Finding God in the Places we Ignore* (Sisters: Multnomah Publishers), 123.

¹⁸ Stanley Grenz, *A Primer on Post Modernism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company), 88.

experience God to believe in Him. God has to earn their respect, It hasn't always been that way, there was a time when there was no analysis of any religious thought, and just acceptance of what religious leaders told one to do.

Postmodernism didn't just 'pop' out of nowhere. It is a rejection of modern thought, the unquestioning acceptance of whatever those in powers said was true, which grew out of the very beginnings of Christian belief.

Before the Reformation, Christendom made its way from the margins of society, to the absolute center of it. Constantine's Edict of Milan in 313AD, freeing Christians from persecution throughout the Empire set the stage for a societal shift from paganism to Christendom. According to Stuart Murray's *Post Christendom*, many of the epithets used to describe Constantine as dictatorial, bloodthirsty, and violent¹⁹, seem to indicate that while he may have adopted Christianity, he didn't necessarily live out the lifestyle prescribed by Christ. Was Constantine really a Christian? No one really knows for sure, but some believe he was converted on his deathbed in 337. Constantine promoted Christianity by favoring it throughout the kingdom rather than suppressing paganism. He closed cultic temples and provided financial resources to the Christian Church, conveying status and power to the bishops of the church and offering incentives for people to convert to Christianity. Pagans were still allowed to practice their religion, but they were required to do so quietly. Soon being Christian was seen as a means to wealth and power. This acceptance of Christendom within the Roman Empire cost many Christians in Persia their lives. Christians living within the Persian Empire were seen as Christian representatives of the Roman Empire and were killed. It wasn't long before pagans were

¹⁹ Stuart Murray, *Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World* (Paternoster, 2004), 31.

‘repelled by the inconsistent lives of professing Christians’²⁰, but it was too late. By the end of the fourth century, Christendom had become so entrenched in European society, there was no turning back. Christendom did not mean that the world was peaceful and living out Christ’s directive his people. Quite the contrary; the next few centuries gave the Church its opportunity to rise to it’s zenith of wealth and power, not to mention corruption.

No history of Christendom would be complete without mentioning the Crusades. The idea of the Crusades grew in popularity in the twelfth century. They were carried out by the Church to retake Jerusalem and spread Christianity throughout all of Western Europe. The Crusades left power in the hands of the monarchy and the Church. In the pre-modern world, few were educated and social position was largely determined at birth. These circumstances led to a lack of freedom for most of the people in the realm of Christendom. People were told what to think and even if they were fortunate enough to be afforded an education, the same people had authority over the universities as well

The Renaissance had elevated humans to the center of reality. The theories of Aristotle were being question by scientists like Copernicus, who in 1543 published his thesis *On The Revolutions of the Celestial Orbits*. This book theorized that the earth revolved around the sun, and that the sun was the center of the universe. It wasn’t long after that, in the early 1600s, when Galileo published several works also undermining Aristotle’s theories. He hypothesized that heavenly bodies weren’t perfect, as the sun had spots, and the moon had valleys and mountains. He also supported Copernicus’ theory of heliocentric astronomy based on his observations of the phases of Venus and moons orbiting Jupiter. Galileo’s final blow to Aristotle’s work came when he proved that

²⁰ Murray, *Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World*, 53.

objects of differing mass fell at the same rate. He proved his theory by dropping objects from the top of the tower of Pisa. Galileo so enraged the Church, that the Inquisition sentenced him to house arrest on the grounds that his teachings contradicted Scripture and church teachings.

Equally important to the disintegration of the Church's authority was the Reformation begun by Luther with his 95 theses and doctrine of justification by faith alone. Descartes gave people permission to question with his famous statement, "I think, therefore I am". In 1781, Immanuel Kant wrote his *Critique of Pure Reason*, which to many, laid the foundation for modernity. Suddenly, people started thinking that the rights given to humans by God were for all, not just the privileged few. The Age of Enlightenment came along, with thinkers looking to human reason and scientific discovery for answers rather than imposed revelations, giving rise to autonomy. With this came Isaac Newton's scientific discoveries and the premise that science could explain everything. A corollary to this theory was that all knowledge was good and would better society. This thought process ushered in the age of modernity and with it the opinion that humankind was the center of reality. Medieval and Reformation thinkers had believed that humanity was important only insofar as it fit into God's story of His interaction with His creation. Enlightenment thinkers reversed the theory and judged the importance of God on His value to the story of humanity. Additionally, Enlightenment thinkers attributed greater intellect and reasoning capabilities to mankind than their predecessors did. Thus began Modernism and the quest for omniscience or certainty and emancipation of one's reason from the bondage of revelation. Modernism emerged from the social and political revolution sweeping Europe. Culture was becoming: more urban

and less rural, industrial rather than agrarian and secularism was growing while organized religion in daily life was diminishing. After all, religion had no place within modernity, as its pillars of thought were practicality, individuality and progress.

Many scholars do not believe that society has reached a state of post-Christendom yet, but we are well on our way. An emphasis is placed on the fact that while we are moving away from a Christian centered society; it does not mean that Christianity is disappearing. What it does mean is that the influence Christianity once had on personal beliefs and public policies is diminishing rapidly.

Postmodernism can be understood as the erosion of confidence in the rational as sole guarantor and deliverer of truth, coupled with a deep skepticism of science - particularly modern science's pretentious claims to an ultimate theory of everything.²¹ An erosion in one's faith and trust of science is nowhere near as unsettling as the erosion of the belief that there are moral absolutes. Children, youth and young adults as a whole no longer believe that stealing is wrong, or that swearing is a problem. In their paradigm, if you are hungry and have no way to feed yourself, then it's fine to steal the food you need. They explain their constant use of inappropriate language as 'a simple use of words that 'don't necessarily hurt anyone'. They may believe in God not as the great "I am", but rather a benevolent being that may or may not exist.

Foucault said power is knowledge. If this is true, then it is even more important that we as Christians teach our children God's ways of living. If we are not teaching them about God and God's love, then they will be learning the ways of the world. Our

²¹ James K.A. Smith, *Who's afraid of Post-Modernism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 62.

children will not be deriving their power from God, they will be deriving it from a fallen world full of sin.

Jacques Derrida reputed that there is nothing outside of the text. He alleged that no matter what we do, we are interpreting the textual event. Derrida emphasizes that there are “important, legitimate determinations of context; in particular; the context for understanding a text, thing or event is established by a community of interpreters who come to an agreement about what constitutes the true interpretation of a text, thing or event”.²² If the world is to be interpreted, shouldn't it be through the lens of the Bible? Are we allowing the Bible govern our children's view of the world, or are we permitting media and society to do that for us? What holds the world's attention; Bible stories or rampant consumerism?

Are we really better off today? Are our children better off than we were? And what about God? Where does He fit into the picture? Thirty years ago, there was no sense in staying home Sunday morning, because there was no one around to play with anyway, everyone was in church! Today, it's hard to find anyone in the neighborhood that goes to church. Parents want to sleep in and kids have sporting events every Sunday morning. Community has decayed from neighborhoods where everyone knew each other and neighbors were involved in local congregations and civic organizations to online communities where people may never meet face to face. Children and teens are so overscheduled that many don't have even an hour on Sunday to give to God...how can we expect them to dedicate their lives to Him?

²² Smith, *Who's afraid of Post-Modernism*, 53.

It's easy to look at all the research and read all of the books, then bury our heads in the sand and say. 'this doesn't apply to us, our young people still believe in God, they're just busy'. The problem isn't just that our children and youth are busy; the problem is we are not engaging them. We as a church are not feeding them the healthy balanced diet necessary to have them grow in faith and in a personal relationship with God. I have been in youth ministry for the last 25 years both on a multi-state conference level and within the local church, and have witnessed the deterioration of youth ministry. It has happened at an alarming pace, and no one seemed to notice. Young people are disappearing from our congregations, meetings and conferences. They are not finding mainstream religion an inviting or trustworthy place.

Now that many United Methodist congregations in New England have no children or youth attending on any given Sunday morning, people are beginning to acknowledge the problem. The question remains, is it too late? Are we able to reverse the trend and get children and youth back into a relationship with their Creator?

I truly believe that we can reinvigorate our youth and reengage them in every aspect of worship and ministry. But first, we must revitalize our churches by reclaiming our Wesleyan heritage, re-establishing the priesthood of all believers and recovering a grace-filled theology. It sounds like a daunting task, but if we return to our roots, it will not be a complicated undertaking. John and Charles Wesley were able to breathe new life into the Church of England in the 18th century by exemplifying a living faith rooted in the love for God.

For the Wesleys, theology was never meant to be either boring or irrelevant. The ultimate purpose of theology is transformation. And central to this understanding was their view that everyone is called to be a theologian. As you live out your life daily, you are continually acting out and reflecting upon who you are and to

whom you belong. For Christians, Jesus Christ is the central reference point in that ongoing process, the goal of which is to be changed by God into more loving, more Christ like people. This is theology, and nothing could be more exciting or relevant in our lives. Everyone has a legitimate role to play in this unfolding, transformative process within the community of faith. Theology, if it is approached with this kind of attitude, is both empowering and liberating. Actually, 'doing theology' feels more like a wondrous and exciting adventure.²³

The United Methodist Church is in need of a paradigm shift. Leonard Sweet contends that we as a church must stop trying to teach the Bible using 'Gutenberg methods in a Google world'. Children and youth learn very differently today; we can no longer expect teaching methods from the 1950s and 1960s to work in 2010. Additionally, we need to create a catechetical model that will lead the adults into a true Christian community while sowing the seeds of faith and discipleship for our children. This project will provide an outline for churches to not only engage children and youth in the life of the church, but also engage the congregation in the lives of the children and youth in their communities. It is my hope that by creating a catechetical model that involves the whole congregation from birth to death, we can once again create a dynamic process of knowing and living one's faith in God. It is this dynamic faith, rooted in a theology of grace that set in motion the Methodist movement in the 18th century, and it is my belief that same actions can revitalize the Methodist denomination in the 21st century. It can be done. It must be done.

²³ Paul Wesley Chilcote, *Recapturing the Wesley's Vision* (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004). 15-16

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

God created human beings in His own likeness, “not out of need, but rather out of abundance”.¹ Humanity was given life by God, and continues to enjoy life due to God’s merciful plan. He gave humans the ability to love, to worship, to serve and to fellowship with Him. Revelation 4:11 says, “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being”. In his *Revision of the Shorter Catechism*, John Wesley answers the question: “What is the chief end of man?” by saying: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever”².

Revelation 4:11 makes it clear that humans were created to glorify God. The New Testament is filled with references describing how and why to worship God, but what about the Old Testament? Did worship just come into being through Jesus? Were humans truly created to worship God? Are the worship services we attend today what God had in mind when He instituted worship? Why then, if we were created to worship God, if we have that need which we long to fulfill, why are so many people no longer interested in worship? What can we do to reengage our youth in worship? Are we to worship the same way today that our forbearers did thousands of years ago?

¹Gregory Boyd, *Repenting of Religion: Turning from Judgement to the Love of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 29.

² Jas. Alex. MacDonald, *Wesley's Revision of the Shorter Catechism* (London: Simpkin Marshall & Co, 1906), 1.

How did humanity fulfill that innate need for worship before the advent of a ‘worship service’?

In an effort to keep from getting bogged down with the philosophy of religion or reason for worship, I turned to the Bible itself for information. The first sign of worship for the Creator comes in Genesis 4:3-4, “In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering.” There is no indication in the Bible that this offering was commanded by God, so it is feasible that Cain and subsequently Abel brought these sacrifices to the Lord out of an innate need to worship and praise their Creator with the fruits of their labor.

The next hint of worship is in Genesis 8:20-21. The floods had dried up, and Noah and his family had left the ark. Immediately upon leaving the ark, “...Noah built an altar to the Lord and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood.” It would appear that Noah was communicating with God, praising and thanking Him for safe passage for his family and the animals.

Abram (Abraham) built his first altar to the Lord in Genesis 12:7. As Abram was traveling through the land, he arrived in Shechem. In verse 7, “The Lord appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your offspring I will give this land’. So he built an altar there to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord.” Abraham then built another altar to the Lord in verse 18 after he had parted ways with Lot. The Lord again appeared to Abram and told him that his offspring would be given all of the land as far as he could see. It was

this pronouncement that caused Abram to build the second altar. “So Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the Lord”. In each situation, Abraham was commemorating an interaction with God.

Genesis 21:33, says: “Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called upon the name of the Lord, the Eternal God.” While the planting of this tree is not the same as building an altar, Abraham apparently sees it as some type of worship as he plants it before calling on the name of the Lord.

Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only son Isaac in obedience to God in
Genesis 22:29:

When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.” Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.” The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.

One can only assume that Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his only son to God was a form of worship and certainly of obedience.

Genesis 26:23-25 recounts God speaking with Isaac: “Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake

of my servant Abraham.' Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well".

Later in Genesis 28:16, Jacob placed a stone on the ground and poured oil over it. When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it." Gen 28:17-19 describes Isaac's reaction to his experience at the place he had slept: "He was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of this is the gate of heaven.' Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. He called that place Bethel".

Jacob and Laban built an altar and offered a sacrifice as they called upon God to be a judge in Genesis 31:48-54:

Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me today." That is why it was called Galeed. It was also called Mizpah, because he said, "May the Lord keep watch between you and me when we are away from each other. If you mistreat my daughters or if you take any wives besides my daughters, even though no one is with us, remember that God is a witness between you and me". Laban also said to Jacob, "Here is this heap, and here is this pillar. I have set up between you and me. This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not go past this heap to your side to harm you and that you will not go past this heap and pillar to my side to harm me. May the God of Abraham^{and} the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us." So Jacob took an oath in the name of the Fear of his father Isaac. He offered a sacrifice there in the hill country and invited his relatives to a meal.

Genesis 33:20 describes Jacob building an altar after reuniting with his brother:

"There he set up an altar and called it El Elohe Israel"

In Genesis 35:1-15, God tells Jacob to go back to Bethel and build an altar: Then God said to Jacob, "Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau." So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes. Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have

gone." So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had and the rings in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem. Then they set out, and the terror of God fell upon the towns all around them so that no one pursued them. Jacob and all the people with him came to Luz (that is, Bethel) in the land of Canaan. There he built an altar, and he called the place El Bethel, because it was there that God revealed himself to him when he was fleeing from his brother. Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died and was buried under the oak below Bethel. So it was named Allon Bacuth. After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again and blessed him. God said to him, "Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel. " So he named him Israel. And God said to him, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body. The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you." Then God went up from him at the place where he had talked with him. Jacob set up a stone pillar at the place where God had talked with him, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it. Jacob called the place where God had talked with him Bethel.

Jacob worshipped just before his death in Genesis 47:29-31:

“ And the time drew near that Israel must die; and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him: 'If now I have found favor in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt. But when I sleep with my fathers, thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place.' And he said: 'I will do as thou hast said. Swear to me', he said. Then Joseph swore to him, and Israel worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff”.

The book of Genesis reveals twelve instances of what may be construed as rudimentary worship of the Lord. In each case, the person builds an altar, offers a sacrifice, or finds a way to commemorate the space as special, as that particular spot is where they have experienced a communication or blessing from God. Their immediate response was to commemorate the interaction with the Lord. Is that not a form of worship?

Worship “usually refers to specific acts of religious praise, honor, or devotion, typically directed to a supernatural being such as God, a god or goddess. It is the informal term in English for what sociologists of religion call *cultus*, the body of practices and

traditions that correspond to theology”³ Worship is “an acknowledgment of transcendence”⁴ according to Evelyn Underhill. She continues saying: “that is to say, of a reality independent of the worshipper, which is always more or less coloured by mystery, and which is there first”⁵

According to Dr. John Witvliet, “the ultimate purpose of Christian worship is union with God”⁶. George Florovsky considers Christian worship to be “primarily and essentially an act of praise and adoration, which also implies thankful acknowledgement of God’s embracing love and redemptive loving-kindness”⁷. Worship fulfills an innate need we have as part of our relationship with our Creator. Without worship, we are missing part of our relationship with God. That missing part leaves us with a mystery however; how do we know what’s missing and where do we go to find it? Many theologians and Biblical scholars suggest that we worship God because He created us to worship Him, but when did it begin? How did worship begin, and how did it morph into what we do today? Is that one hour a week really what we should be emphasizing to our youth?

Are our worship services in the 21st century what God prescribed in the Bible? Does God consider His people sitting in a building, singing, reciting a few lines, listening to Scripture and a sermon worship, or is worship a state of being? Should we consider worship to be that fleeting moment here on earth when one comes back into that

³ *Worship*. Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Worship>. 2011

⁴ Evelyn Underhill, *Worship* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2002), 3.

⁵ Underhill, *Worship*, 3.

⁶ James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 23.

⁷ White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 23.

relationship with God that they were meant to have? It would seem that the question of how we worship is just as important as why we worship.

Worship does not have a single definition. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines it as: "reverence offered a divine being or supernatural power; also: an act of expressing such reverence". According to Telford Work: "Worship – the time and energy we spend adoring our creator and redeemer and sustainer – is the treasure of the Christian"⁸ Gary M. Burge, in his article in *Christianity Today*, says:

Worship, I believe, is a divine encounter that touches many dimensions of my personhood. It is an encounter in which God's glory, Word, and grace are unveiled, and we respond, in songs and prayers of celebration. Worshipers seek an encounter with the glory of God, the transcendent power and numinous mystery of the divine—and in so doing; they recognize a Lord whose majesty evokes strong praise, petition, and transformation⁹

Evelyn Underhill describes worship as sudden, almost involuntary and overwhelming:

Has it never happened to you to lose yourself for a moment in a swift and satisfying experience for which you found no name? When the world took on a strangeness, and you rushed out to meet it, in a mood at once exultant and ashamed? Was there not an instant when you took the lady who now orders your dinner into your arms, and she suddenly interpreted to you the whole of the universe? a universe so great, charged with so terrible an intensity, that you have hardly dared to think of it since. Do you remember that horrid moment at the concert, when you became wholly unaware of your comfortable seven-and-sixpenny seat? Those were onsets of involuntary contemplation; sudden partings of the conceptual veil. Dare you call them the least significant moments of your life? Did you not then, like the African saint, "thrill with love and dread," though you were not provided with a label for that which you' adored?

It will not help you to speak of these experiences as "mere emotion." Mere emotion then inducted you into a world which you recognised as more valid — in the highest sense, more rational — than that in which you usually dwell: a world which had a wholeness, a meaning, which exceeded the sum of its parts. Mere

⁸ Telford Work, "Why Study Worship?," *TelfordWork.net*, Sept 2008, <http://www.westmont.edu/~work/classes/rs150/spr2002/whyliturgics.html> (accessed October 23, 2009).

⁹ Gary Burge, "Are Evangelicals Missing God at Church?," *Christianity Today* (October 6, 1997).

emotion then brought you to your knees, made you at once proud and humble, showed you your place. It simplified and unified existence: it stripped off the little accidents and ornaments which perpetually deflect our vagrant attention, and gathered up the whole being of you into one state, which felt and knew a Reality that your intelligence could not comprehend. Such an emotion is the driving power of spirit, an august and ultimate thing: and this your innermost inhabitant felt it to be, whilst your eyes were open to the light.

Now that simplifying act, which is the preliminary of all mystical experience, that gathering of the scattered bits of personality into the one which is really you — into the "unity of your spirit," as the mystics say — the great forces of love, beauty, wonder, grief, may do for you now and again. These lift you perforce from the consideration of the details to the contemplation of the All: turn you from the tidy world of image to the ineffable world of fact. But they are fleeting and ungovernable experiences, descending with dreadful violence on the soul. Are you willing that your participation in Reality shall depend wholly on these incalculable visitations: on the sudden wind and rain that wash your windows, and let in the vision of the landscape at your gates? You can, if you like, keep those windows clear. You can, if you choose to turn your attention that way, learn to look out of them. These are the two great phases in the education of every contemplative: and they are called in the language of the mystics the purification of the senses and the purification of the will."¹⁰

Each of the writers describes worship differently, but all seem to agree that there is a spirit of mystery involved. There is no verifiable reason as to why the individuals in the Bible felt the need to worship the Creator. We know they had a relationship with God and felt compelled to celebrate their interaction with Him. The New Testament explains that we worship God because we were created to do so. If that is true, why then, have so many fallen away and seemingly no longer feel the need to worship? There have always been and will always be people, who, due to the fallen nature of humanity, do not long for the personal relationship with God that He desires for each of us. It does not seem likely that so many are falling away from the church due to a lack of desire for a relationship with God. We have spiritual children who are interested in, and want to worship God, but are unhappy with the way worship is happening in their church.

¹⁰ Evelyn Underhill, *Practical Mysticism* (New York, 1915), 34.

Robert Webber feels that there have been several worship paradigm shifts through history, and that worship has “degenerated into a program or production for the entertainment of the people”¹¹ He also maintains that “the content of worship is a rehearsal of the covenantal relationship that God has established with Israel and the church.”¹² (A theory, incidentally, shared by the Senior Pastor of my church!) Humanity is drawn to worship their Creator as a means of evoking that personal relationship that we were fashioned to have with Him. Abel, Cain, Noah and the rest in the book of Genesis knew of this feeling. There is no Biblical evidence of Abel or Cain communicating with God before the offerings, but God was quick to speak to Cain about His displeasure with his offering so we may extrapolate that there was some sort of relationship. The rest of the individuals had direct contact with God at one time or another. That contact imbibed them with such emotion and feeling that they immediately commemorated the moment: worship. Interestingly, there is also no Biblical evidence suggesting that worship consist of candle lighting, Scripture reading, singing or other liturgical practices common today.

God was exceedingly clear in telling His people what He did not want as worship while they were in the wilderness. God had shown His power by freeing the Israelites from the Pharaoh’s control. He had parted the Sea to allow them to escape and provided for their every need in the wilderness, yet there was still unrest amongst Israel. Israel followed God by day and night; they heard His voice from atop Sinai, yet they (with Aaron’s blessing) still fashioned a golden calf and began to worship it when Moses was ‘delayed in coming down from the mountain’ Exodus 32:1. The golden calf was Aaron’s

¹¹ Robert Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999), 100.

¹² Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World*, 103.

attempt to fashion a likeness of God, as he proclaimed “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the LORD” in Exodus 32:3. He and the Israelites quickly understood that God did not want His children bowing down to graven images, but being a jealous God wanted them to worship Him alone. God never specifically states what He expects for worship however. He does tell His children: “You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy” in Exodus 31:13 and repeats the dictate in Exodus 31:14 when He says: “Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you”.

What does all this information mean? How does the Biblical view of worship fit into the today’s paradigm? Humans have been commanded to keep the Sabbath holy and forbidden to worship idols or create any graven images, but have not been given any other specific dictates as to how to worship. Our worship today is a conglomeration of artificially created customs. “If you go further and spend some time tracing the history of those practices, you will soon discover that most of our religious habits are man-made choices. In fact, you’re likely to discern a pattern about the way we ‘do church’ these days; if we do it, it’s probably not in the Bible as one of the practices of the early church”.¹³ With that being said, how do we figure out what we should be doing and teaching our children about worship?

As created beings, humans are completely dependent on their Creator, and have been given clear commands concerning their behavior. According to Micah 6:8b, humans are to, “act justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God”. Matthew 22:37 and 39 admonish the reader to, “love the Lord your God with all your

¹³ Frank and George Barna Viola, *Pagan Christianity? Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 2002). xxviii

heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind..... and to love your neighbor as you love yourself”. It is difficult for many of God’s creation to accept the statutes laid forth by Him even though they are quite simple. Too often, human beings reject any type of law, assuming it to be in direct opposition to grace and too controlling. In their arrogance, humans too often feel they are the center of the universe, when in reality they are constantly and continually at the mercy of God the Creator for everything they have and do. This relationship, albeit seemingly one-sided, does not mean that humans are in any way insignificant or unimportant to God. Jesus once said, “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.” Matthew 10:29-31. God clearly loves and cares for His creation. It is that love that prompted the Creator to set limits for His creation. These limits, while most often interpreted as dominance by humans, were put in place to keep them safe in an otherwise dangerous and difficult fallen world. God, the Creator, is teaching His children how to live a safe and fulfilling life by setting limits and creating rules for us to live by. It would follow, then, that humans would teach their children and their children’s children the same rules and limits to keep them safe. It is in fact, written in a myriad of places in Scripture, that we are to teach our children to obey God’s commands. God does not leave the job of parenting for us to ‘figure out’; He tells us very clearly what He expects us to teach our children.

Parenting is a job like no other. A human child is in need of teaching and training that begins the moment he or she is born. The child learns to trust that their needs will be met, how to walk, talk, interact with others and obey his or her parents in the first few

years of its life. Once they reach school age, the learning is shared between home and some form of school setting. A child's learning isn't just confined to school; they learn to ride a bike, skip stones on water and pitch a curve ball at home. A child born into a Christian home will also learn about God, His commandments and His promises from their family. Throughout Scripture we are instructed to teach our children, and bring them up in the ways of the Lord. God introduces this command to Abraham in Genesis 18:19, "For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him." It doesn't stop there however; God continues his instruction by telling humans to teach their children and their children's children, and to "be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live" Deuteronomy 4:8. Scripture makes it very clear that parents are assigned the role of teaching their children about mighty acts of God in redeeming his people. Exodus 13:8 On that day tell your son, 'I do this because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.'

Isaiah admonishes parents to tell their children about God's faithfulness. Isaiah 38:19, "The living, the living—they praise you, as I am doing today; fathers tell their children about your faithfulness". This message is carried through into the New Testament, where we read in Ephesians 6:4, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord".

God commands us to teach his commandments "to your children and to their children after them" in Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

There are no less than twenty-three references to ‘walking in His ways’ in the New International version of the Bible. It would seem that it is very important to God, but what exactly are ‘His ways’? What is it that God wants from us? “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” Micah 6:8. That seems so incredibly simple. Why then can we not follow this simple piece of advice, and how do we teach our children to do the same?

Jesus repeated Deuteronomy 6:5, “Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” in Matthew (22:37), Mark (12:30) and Luke (10:27)

It seems quite apparent that God is instructing families to teach their children the way to be faithful. There are other passages which detail the importance of sharing His Word in the community: God wants everyone to know of His works and love, Learning the law and story of God was so important that Joshua read the law to everyone, including the aliens who were among them. Joshua 8:34-35 “Afterward, Joshua read all the words of the law—the blessings and the curses—just as it is written in the Book of the Law. There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and children, and the aliens who lived among them”.

New Testament admonishes us to teach our children as well. In Timothy 3:14-16, we see that the young pastor Timothy, had known the Holy Scriptures from infancy, and he is being reminded that Scripture is from God and to be used as a plumb line for life. "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness". Ephesians 4 :1-11 says:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

God has made His plan for His children and their instruction eminently clear. Jesus summed it up quite succinctly in Matthew 22:37-40: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Jesus continued by saying that we should all “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” in Matthew 28:19.

Jesus told us explicitly what to do. We have a manual, just like the car owner. He told *us*, as disciples, *to make* disciples. Not converts to Christianity, nor to some particular “faith and practice”. He did not tell us to arrange for people to ‘get in’ or ‘make the cut’ after they die, nor to produce and maintain ‘successful’ churches. These will certainly happen if-but only if-we are (his constant apprentices) and do (make constant apprentices) what he told us to be and do.

John Wesley understood that directive. He is quoted as saying "Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on Earth." ¹⁴ Wesley preached on the streets and in the pubs of England, reaching out to the lowest and lost of society. He and his brother Charles felt that the Church of England had become impotent. The worship services had become dry and lifeless. “Christianity, according to the Wesleys is not so much a religion as it is a relationship. Christian discipleship begins with God’s offer of relationship to us all, but is extended by means of fellowship or shared experience within the community of faith”¹⁵. It was this understanding of relationship that set Wesley and his movement apart from other religions. John Wesley understood that “something had to be done to provide care for those who had discovered faith in Christ and to nurture

¹⁴ Segen Corporation of Hendersonville, TN, *The Works of John Wesley* (Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers, 1995). 272.

¹⁵ Paul Wesley Chilcote, *Recapturing the Wesley's Vision* (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004). 20.

them”.¹⁶

John Wesley was ordained in the Church of England, and felt his preaching and activities were well within the bounds of the Church. It was not only Wesley’s preaching, but also his class meetings that caused a schism between him and the Church of England. John and Charles Wesley knew that holding each other accountable for their actions was an intrinsic part of living a Godly life. They created small study groups focusing on Scripture, prayer and accountability in their daily lives, resulting in being called ‘Methodists’. These class meetings combined with Wesley’s preaching anywhere someone would listen to him became the backbone of Methodism. This revival was not limited to adults. Wesley’s training as a child by his mother, Susannah had left a huge impact on him. The plight of the thousands of lower class children weighed heavily on John Wesley. He instituted classes on Sundays to teach the children to read and write along with the basics of Biblical knowledge. John Wesley’s theory on education was summed up in a letter written to Mary Bishop on May 17, 1781 when he said, “Make Christians, my dear sister, make Christians!”¹⁷ Wesley understood the importance of education not only to attain salvation and live a godly life, but also its power to implement social reform. He opened his own school in Kingswood, near Bristol in 1748. “Having procured proper Masters, and a sufficient number of children, most of whom were as well inclined as could be expected, our first point was, to answer the design of (Maddox, *Rethinking Wesley's Theology for Contemporary Methodism* 1998) holiness, by instilling the principles of true religion, speculative and practical, and training them up

¹⁶ Randy L. Maddox, ed., *Rethinking Wesley's Theology for Contemporary Methodism*, Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1998), 129.

¹⁷ Segen Corporation of Hendersonville, TN, *The Works of John Wesley*, 37.

in the ancient way, that they might be rational, scriptural Christians”¹⁸

Education had been extremely important in Wesley’s upbringing. His mother, Susanna held to strict educational standards, which included teaching each of her children to read at age five. Her high standards were not limited to academia, as “she stressed the importance of the Lord’s Day, that it must be distinguished from all other days—a precept that was, no doubt, a reminder of her own earlier origins”.¹⁹ Her rules and teaching methods stuck with John Wesley throughout his life. “For the Wesleys, theology was never meant to be either boring or irrelevant. The ultimate purpose of theology is transformation”.²⁰ Dallas Willard expands nicely on that transformation when he says: “We need to emphasize that the Great Omission from the Great Commission is not obedience to Christ, but discipleship, apprenticeship to him. Through discipleship, obedience will take care of itself, and we will also escape the snares of judgmentalism and legalism, whether directed toward ourselves or toward others.”²¹

That is the crux of how we should be raising our children. Biblically we are told to love God with our whole being, and that is exactly what we should be modeling for our children. Those of us who call ourselves Christians cannot continue to expect children and youth to be flocking to Sunday morning worship service when our Tuesday afternoon or Friday evening behavior is not portraying obedience to Christ.

Youth today are spiritual, and long to know God and Jesus, but they are not

¹⁸ Segen Corporation of Hendersonville, TN, *The Works of John Wesley*, 293.

¹⁹ Kenneth Collin, *John Wesley; A Theological Journey*. (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2003), 17.

²⁰ Chilcote, *Recapturing the Wesley's Vision*, 15.

²¹ Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (New York: HarperOne, 2006). 168.

hearing or seeing the message in a manner that they appreciate or absorb. They want to be a *participant* in worship, not merely be a spectator. They crave to be involved in every aspect of worship, and they yearn to hear God's Word be made relevant to them and their situations. The church must change its delivery system and make sure the message stays true to the Gospel in order to help today's youth grow into members of a church that is alive and striving to do the work of God here on earth. We must all strive to become "*disciples* – students, apprentices, practitioners – of Jesus Christ, steadily learning from him how to live the life of the Kingdom of Heaven into every corner of human existence." ²²

Living as a disciple of Christ doesn't mean just attending worship services once a week and claiming to be Christian on a census form. We have been told, through the Bible, and even shown by Jesus, how we are to live as Christians, but we ignore it all and go our own way. This arrogance is costing us dearly. According to David Kinneman and Gabe Lyons, "The image of the Christian faith has suffered a major setback. Our most recent data show that young outsiders have lost much of their respect for the Christian faith. These days nearly two out of every five young outsiders (38 percent) claim to have a bad impression of present-day Christianity. The research reveals that the three most widely held perceptions of the Christian church are that it is (1) antihomosexual (an image held by 91 percent of sixteen to nineteen year old outsiders) (2) judgmental (87 percent) and (3) hypocritical (85 percent)". ²³ Youth and young adults no longer trust the church and are looking for Jesus in places other than mainline Christian denominational

²² Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship*, 186.

²³ David and Gabe Lyons Kinneman, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007). 27.

churches. Sadly, this is not necessarily a new phenomenon. It has been building for a number of years. Mohandas Ghandi is quoted as saying: “I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ”.

The question remains, how do we emulate Christ and draw people to the Kingdom of God with our behavior? After all, people are much more likely to ‘join a group’ if they are *attracted* to it, not *forced* to participate. Thankfully, we need look no further than the New Testament to observe Jesus and His followers. The key is not to merely memorize Scripture or know what God expects of us; the key is to live life as a follower of Jesus Christ.

The New Testament draws a vivid picture of living within community as a follower of Jesus. The churches addressed and described by the writers of the New Testament are far from perfect however. In his book *Practicing Resurrection*, Eugene Petersen writes:

“ In Thessalonica, some members of the church were so sure that the Lord was returning any day that they quit working, They sat around speculating about what kind of cloud would provide the chariot for Jesus’ arrival and letting their less spiritual brothers and sisters provide them with meals. The Corinthians were a fractious crew, arguing and squabbling over various items of behavior having to do with diet and sex and worship. The Christians in Colossae were muddled in their esoteric thinking about Christ and needed straightening out. The Galation Christians were regressing into some tired old legalisms and needed a thorough shaking up. The Romans, a mixed congregation of Jews and Gentile, were having a hard time finding a common base in Christ. Philemon, one of the leaders in the Colossian church, had a runaway slave returned to him and required some firm counsel from Paul in how to treat him. Timothy and Titus were responsible for leading less than ideal churches and needed Paul’s specific instruction and encouragement”²⁴

²⁴ Eugene H. Peterson, *Practice Resurrection* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010). 16.

'koinonia' to describe the fellowship in Christ the early Christians enjoyed. Koinonia is the anglicization of a Greek word (κοινωνία) that means communion by intimate participation. The word is used frequently in the New Testament of the Bible to describe the relationship within the early Christian church²⁵

"On the day of judgment, surely, we shall not be asked what we have read, but what we have done; not how well we have spoken but how well we have lived. "²⁶

²⁵ "Koinonia," in *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*; (Wikimedia Foundation Inc., 11 August 2010 at 17:20 UTC) [encyclopedia on-line]; available from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koinonia>; Internet; retrieved 10 October 2010.

²⁶ Thomas A Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 2003), 4.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Youth Ministry

Youth ministry is not a new topic in ministry. It is a very fluid ministry. Type in the words ‘youth ministry’ on a google search, and you will receive 9,800,000 results in .33 seconds. The documents retrieved by this search will range in scope from games to Bible study. For many years, youth ministry was considered an ‘offshoot’ of parish or congregational ministry in the local church. There have always been gathering places for the youth in a church, with games, food and prayer time, but youth ministry was not always truly integrated with congregational ministry. Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster labelling it the “one-eared Mickey Mouse Model of youth ministry”¹ in their book *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry* was really a turning point for youth ministry. Their book suggested that youth should not be on the periphery of church and worship, but rather included in all aspects of ministry, all the time. This prophetic call to arms was reporting a dramatic drop in adolescents attending church twelve years ago. Their book doesn’t suggest topics for youth meetings or suggest games to keep young people occupied. They spend their time discussing opportunities to bring God to youth and to stir a passion in those young people to serve and form a relationship with Him.

¹ Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster , *The Godbearing Life* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1998). 31.

There have been literally thousand of books on youth ministry written in the last twenty years. A multitude of these volumes can be construed merely as time fillers. They list ideas for meetings, group play and tying in an activity with some Christian topic. There has been a paradigm shift in the last 5-10 years, moving from time filling programs to actual spirituality and faith formation.

For those seeking information on what youth are facing in schools and daily life, Walt Mueller and his team of writers at The Center for Parent/Youth Understanding have their finger on the pulse of youth culture today. Any parent or youth worker looking for information on topics from youth risk taking to music to peer pressure, need only pick up Mueller's latest book, or visit his website <http://www.cpyu.org>. In either venue, Mueller and his team address the daily pressures and life situations our youth find themselves in. He (and his team) literally comb through websites, books, magazine, television shows and any other media format that kids are exposed to in order to gather the data they put forth. The information he has compiled and shares can be frightening and overwhelming for adults, but is a necessity for anyone who has or works with children and teenagers. His 'tell it like it is' writing style gives adults access to information they may not even know they need! He makes it easy to stay current with today's culture while through a theologically sound lens.

The CPYU group are not the only people stepping into the world of today's teens. There are a myriad of books that will allow you to peek inside the seemingly closed and confusing world of youth culture. *Hurt* and *Deep Justice in a Broken World* are examples of books which give insight into some of the inadvertent damage being done to our young people today. Rather than just reporting cultural trends and happenings, Clark takes the

time to talk to youth, and provides valuable insight into what they are feeling, experiencing and craving in their lives. Books in this genre may sound depressing, but quite to the contrary, they offer hope and healing for a generation that feels pressure from parents, peers and school. It is imperative that adults who work in youth ministry understand what adolescents face day in and day out. The hope comes in hearing how young people want to change the world for the better, participate in mission work around the globe and long for a relationship with their Creator. It's up to the adults in their lives to help facilitate these projects and support their spiritual growth.

Just as important for youth workers is the understanding that even though youth are saying they believe in God, it may not represent the same spiritual underpinning that adults possess. There have been a number of books written studying the religious attitudes and practices among adolescents in America. What seems most prevalent in this genre is the reporting that while teens may attend church with their parents, they have no real faith nor do they hold to many of the moral structures set forth in the Bible. Some of the most discouraging information was repeated several times in Christian Smith's book, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. He interviewed a number of teenagers who spoke frankly about adults having no idea what is going on in their lives socially or religiously. These teens reported that adults "realize it (what they are doing), 'but a lot of times they just look the other way, they don't acknowledge it. A lot of times they just turn their heads and they kind of put up a wall, like they don't want to get involved, don't want to have to deal with it'".² After interviewing one young man, Smith reported that "The parent John feels closest to is his

² Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton Smith, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). 198.

biological father, a nominal Protestant whom he characterizes as irresponsible and lazy, and whom he visits every other weekend. Other than that, John has no significant relationships with relatives, teachers or people at church”³. He goes on to quote John saying; “ ‘Ah, no, our church its not, we’re not involved anymore, really we just go [to Mass].’”⁴ A young man who attends Mass, but has no real connection with any adults in his life. It is a sad commentary on youth ministry, but the problem cannot be solved unless it is first brought to light.

The newest and one of the most prolific topics in youth ministry is relational/contemplative youth ministry. Youth workers and churches have rediscovered the importance of nurturing young people’s spiritual journey. The authors of these books are lifting up the importance of relational ministry; getting to know God and Jesus through relationships with one another. These books are exciting and uplifting to read, stressing the importance of a missional lifestyle and living a life that exemplifies God with everything we do.

There is some literature available that examines youth ministry from a different vantage point. Marva Dawn is a theologian looking at the world of youth ministry through the eyes of an educator. Dr. Dawn is not a youth ministry professional, but has published several books that address children and youth growing up in today’s world. Her wide-ranging education allows her to examine the instruction and training of children and youth from a variety of perspectives. While I do not agree with everything she has written, her fresh perspective and honest insight are thought provoking.

³ Smith, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. 199.

⁴ Smith, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. 199.

John Wesley and the Methodist Church

The study of Wesleyan theology and tradition does not initially sound enthralling, but anyone who calls themselves a Methodist should spend a bit of time reading about the beginnings of the denomination. John and Charles Wesley did not set out to create a new religious denomination. As members of the Church of England, they felt the church had “...exchanged its true vocation – mission- for maintenance. (This is a confusion that slips into the life of the church in every age) It had become distant from and irrelevant to the world it was called to serve. It needed desperately to reclaim its true identity as God’s agent of love in the world.”⁵ The little group formed by the Wesleys intended to focus on prayer, reading the Scripture and personal accountability. The label ‘Methodist’ was given to them by detractors who spent their time creating names to taunt the Wesley brothers and their friends for their methodical study and meeting practices.

There is no quicker way to engage a young person than to tell them a story of someone who is being persecuted by their peers and then is seen as rebelling against the power of the day. John Wesley’s alleged rebellion was his preaching in the streets to the people he felt the Church of England was ignoring, then connecting them to a small study group. His small study group initiative was the genius of his strategy for making disciples. Wesley was not only bringing people to Christ, he was connecting them with a group of people who taught them more about the church, its practices and ordinances. “The small groups of the early Methodists were little more than Bible study and prayer

⁵ Paul Wesley Chilcote, *Recapturing the Wesley's Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004). 94.

groups, designed to expand the menu of their spiritual nourishment.”⁶ The number of small groups grew to a point where Wesley could no longer stay in contact with each of them personally, so he wrote his three simple rules that all of the groups would learn and abide by:

It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

First: By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind .

Secondly: By . . . doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all .

Thirdly: By attending upon all the ordinances of God⁷

John Wesley had inadvertently created a catechism for the Methodist Church before the Methodist Church was even created! Wesley had begun a renewal within the Church. He was not overtly trying to rebel against the Church of England, he was rather, trying to breathe new life into what he felt was a church catering only to the rich and full of inaction. Both Wesleys felt worship was about everything that one did every moment of every day, and that “God was raising up Methodists for the task of resuscitating a missional church”.⁸ Could it be that John and Charles Wesley were beginning the merging church movement in the 18th century?

Post modernity and the Emergent Church

The number of books written about the emerging church conversation has literally exploded in the past several years. The conversation amongst the ‘emergent village’ is wide, varied, at times controversial and often inextricably intertwined with post

⁶ Chilcote, *Recapturing the Wesley's Vision*. 82

⁷ Rueben P. Job, *Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007). 3

⁸ Chilcote, *Recapturing the Wesley's Vision*. 94

modernity. At its best, the emergent church is emphasizing a missional/relational lifestyle; at it worst, it is re-writing Scripture and changing the very message of the Gospel.

As mentioned earlier, postmodernism didn't just 'pop' out of nowhere, it is a rejection of modern thought, the unquestioning acceptance of whatever those in powers said was true. According to Stanley Grenz, "*Postmodernism* refers to an intellectual mood, an array of cultural expressions that call into question the ideals, principles, and values that lay at the heart of the modern mind-set."⁹ Children and youth no longer believe what we tell them they should believe. They insist upon coming to their own conclusions based upon their own research or observations. They test everything, comparing it to what they have read or experienced on their own. While this decision-making paradigm may seem sound, youth today have unprecedented access to information; much of it posted to the internet without the analysis of someone with extensive knowledge of the subject matter. It is nearly impossible to separate fact from opinion on some television networks or the internet. Youth today live in a world where there is no one overarching truth. Everyone has their own truth or narrative, and our youth and young adults firmly believe that's completely acceptable. The problem becomes that lack of absolute morality and the necessity for youth to decide what is right vs. what is wrong. They no longer accept that something is morally wrong because their parents or the Church say it is. With that being said, many young people also do not believe that there is only one God nor that the Church necessarily has the correct vantage point. Enter, the 'emergent conversation'.

⁹ Stanley Grenz, *A Primer on Post Modernism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company), 12.

“According to (Brian) McLaren, the emergent (or emerging) conversation sprung up over ten years ago when a number of young leaders, most of them evangelical, came together to discuss their struggles, issues, questions, challenges, and discoveries – many of them relating to a shift from modern colonial faith to a postmodern and postcolonial faith. Similar conversations were springing up among mainline Protestants and other Christians, with Catholics being the most recent faith group to participate. Though some have labeled it a movement, McLaren prefers to call the Emergent or Emerging Church a conversation, saying that it is still in its ‘embryonic stages’ and just part of a larger movement that is coming together”.¹⁰

The emergent perspective has accused the Church of being self-righteous, judgmental, hypocritical and more widely known for what it opposes rather than what it stands for. While the emerging church is not composed solely of young people, this is regrettably, the opinion of a large number of youth. Questioning the Church as an institution is not bad in itself, as the institution is a human construct. It is the responsibility of Church leaders to ensure that youth have knowledge of Biblical truths.

There are people out there today asking the hard questions brought up by post moderns and the emerging church, and answering them with Biblically sound principles. Many of these writers, pastors and some theologians are calling the Church and its leaders to take a hard look at ‘religion’ and ask if we are fulfilling the mission God has called us to. In his book *Repenting of Religion*, Gregory Boyd is calling the Church to turn from its judgmental way of thinking, to a community of love based on Biblical truth. He maintains that we, as human beings cannot handle the knowledge of good and evil Eve received when she ate from the tree of life. We are attempting to fill the emptiness left by our broken relationship with God by doing something; in this case being

¹⁰ Lillian Kwon, "Catholics Join Emerging Church Conversation," *Christian Today*, March 14, 2009, <http://www.christiantoday.com> (accessed October 18, 2009).

judgmental. He explains by saying: "It's important to notice that the serpent didn't promise Eve anything she didn't already have. The serpent promised Eve she could be 'like God'. Yet she and Adam were already made in the very image and likeness of God (Gen 1:16-27)"¹¹

He continues: It is also important to notice that there is an element of truth in the serpent's lie to Eve. (The most powerful lies always contain some truth.) In a sense, the tree *really did* make Eve like God in knowing good and evil. She was now like God in a way she wasn't before. The serpent's lie wasn't about the *nature* of the forbidden tree and what it would do; it was in the implication that this was *desirable* for her. In fact, for finite beings like ourselves, this kind of knowledge was a curse because it blocks the unconditional and unsurpassable life-giving love of God flowing to us, abiding in us, and flowing through us to others."¹²

The Church is being called to return to that very life-giving love of God. Jesus Himself said He did not come to destroy the law, but rather to fulfill it. The Church does not need to ignore Biblical values, it needs to return to *koinonia*, a community of love and caring in place of the perceived judgment and hypocrisy. Dan Kimball, in his book *They Love Jesus but not the Church*, emphasizes the need for people to follow Christ, not man-made religious dogma. If youth workers and church members were to pay attention to young people today, they would hear their cry, asking them to return to being followers of Christ not religious people.

On the other side of the debate, are writers and pastors who feel that Biblical truths as we have known them are no longer applicable and we should be shifting our whole spiritual paradigm. There are those who feel that all religious doctrine should be disposed of and advocate for a whole new way of life. While that may seem innocuous

¹¹ Gregory Boyd, *Repenting of Religion: Turning from Judgement to the Love of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007). 146.

¹² Boyd, *Repenting of Religion: Turning from judgement to the Love of God*. 147.

and enticing, as a Christian youth leader, one must always be wary of ideas, new or old, that do not keep God at the center of any thought process. Youth are constantly being bombarded with varying cultural, religious and spiritual thought processes. It is our job, as adults, to help them sort through the choices to find the one true God at the center.

If, as an adult working with youth, you're unsure of your theology, or where you stand, do a bit of spiritual seeking yourself. As suggested earlier, find a pastor or someone trusted to talk to. Take some time to read, study and pray yourself. It's hard to guide children and youth along their spiritual journey if you haven't figured it out yourself. I wouldn't necessarily start reading with St. Teresa of Avila, but Henri Nouwen and Dietrich Bonhoeffer are thoughtful, spiritual and understandable. Dallas Willard, Eugene Peterson and N.T. Wright have all written books challenging the world to return to a fresh perspective on following Jesus and worshipping God.

Worship

There are a myriad of books on the subject of worship, but very few answers to the question of where/when worship truly originated. Hughes Oliphant Olds has a multi-volume set titled *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures* which examines worship throughout different time periods through history. In volume 1, the Biblical Period, Olds clearly states that the 'purpose of this work is to come to an understanding of how preaching is worship'.¹³ He quickly gives an overview of the five major genres of preaching: expository, evangelistic, catechetical, festal and prophetic, then dives right

¹³ Hughes Oliphant Old, *Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures*, Vol. I (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1981). 7.

covenantal theology and the relationship of God with His people. He does describe the worship of God's people at the foot of Mount Sinai as the prototype of worship down through the centuries, but he never tackles any sort of worship before that time period. This volume is filled with an immense amount of information concerning preaching and the Bible from Exodus right through the second and third centuries. Volume 6 H.O. Olds' series, *Reading and Preaching the Scriptures, The Modern Age*, stayed true to the pattern of the first in the series, as it described the preaching styles and patterns in worship. In this particular volume, Olds discusses preaching and worship from the beginning of the religious revival in Europe (circa 1789) through the 1980s.

Olds has authored a more compact study on of worship, entitled simply *Worship: Reformed According to Scripture*. This book takes each component of worship and traces its lineage back through the Bible. While not answering the question of the origin of worship explicitly, this book does come closer to elucidation. Olds makes it eminently clear early on that the purpose of worship is to glorify and praise God. He reaches back to Amos when he quotes 5:21-24, reminding the reader that true worship must be Holy, as God has no interest on the sacrifices of the wicked or the praises of the unethical, but he never addresses the worship habits of the Patriarchal fathers.

James White also endeavors to explain the roots of Christian worship in his book: *Introduction to Christian Worship*. White devotes a whole chapter to the evolution of each element of Christian liturgy. The book is easy to comprehend and takes the reader back through the development of the liturgy, explaining it thoroughly, but once again, it does not discuss the roots of worship in pre-history.

The Oxford History of Christian Worship, and *The Search for Origins of Christian Worship*, both examined the progression of liturgy and worship through the ages, but emphasized their origins in either the Jewish tradition or the early Christian church. Both books were written in a more scholarly fashion and a bit tedious, but full of information for those seeking enlightenment concerning the development of worship as we know it today.

Don't forget to explore worship as more than a static, non-participatory event. There are any number of published volumes inviting their readers to become actively involved in worship. Such participation is especially inviting to children and youth. Lighting candles, drawing, even arranging the seats so worshippers can look at each other as well as an altar can really change the experience and bring people closer to God.

Frank Viola and George Barna give a whole different twist to the topic of worship in their book *Pagan Christianity?*. Viola is a proponent and a in loud voice in the house church movement being popularized today. There is of course, nothing wrong with meeting and worshipping in houses, as that is the model we see in the New Testament. This book takes the entire liturgy commonly used Sunday mornings in Christian churches and traces their lineage back (in most cases) to a pagan practice in the Middle Ages or earlier. It's an incredibly interesting book, and seemingly well researched. This volume has become very popular among young adults and even young pastors who are looking for answers in the emerging church movement. It is definitely a thought provoking and interesting work. It is also an example of why adults should be relatively confident in their journey and thought process when working with children and youth. No one has all the answers, but it best to be prepared when talking and teaching children and youth.

After all, in Ephesians 6: 13, we were told: “Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand”. I am not by any means suggesting that house churches, the emerging church or any other new way of thinking is evil. I am suggesting that we should be prepared, with God at our side when we are teaching our children about God and what He has commanded we pass onto them.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DESIGN

This thesis project was designed in response to a general feeling of malaise in the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church concerning youth ministry. When asked, everyone wants youth ministry, supports youth ministry, and cannot understand why children and youth are falling away from the church. Church members will gladly donate money to projects for the youth, and pastors readily agree that youth ministry is a priority, yet very little is being done to help children and youth grow spiritually or stay active in the life of the Church.

It is my thought process that while youth are questioning their parent's belief system, or 'intensity' as my 21 year old son would say, they consider themselves to be spiritual and are searching for a relationship with a 'higher power'.

The United Methodist Church does have education and confirmation materials created by the denomination's publishing house, but the general consensus is that they are tedious and out of date. When asked what material they use for Sunday School, most Christian Educators in the Conference respond, "Oh, I write my own material". This is not to say that there are not many, many talented educators in our midst in the United Methodist Church, however, few of those educators have any theological or denominational training. What is that we are teaching our children and youth? Are we taking seriously the mandate set forth in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 to:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Since youth ministry is sporadic at best in the New England Conference, I began by creating a survey for youth and young adults asking them about worship. While many of the youth may not have the opportunity to participate in a youth group, they have experienced a worship service. The survey consisted of 18 questions, 9 of which invited short answer responses. It was posted on the internet using a survey application. The link for the survey was sent out via email to the 559 churches that comprise the New England Conference. I used the same survey questions to interview 45 youth in person over the course of a six-month period. These youth were from various Christian backgrounds, but all said they attended their local church services at least twice a year. The survey addressed the youth's involvement in their local church through worship. We discussed their church involvement and what they enjoyed most about the worship services.

The next step was to explore what typical churches do to encourage children and youth to stay involved. I was able to speak, via email, to the Pastors of churches in the United States who appear to be having success keeping young people involved in church throughout adolescence. These churches were chosen through the statistical reports submitted to their Conference offices each year. I also had the privilege of spending a week at a conference with pastors and educators from churches across America discussing the religious education of children and youth.

My project called for input from all levels of the church, consequently, I created

another survey and sent it to all of the Bishops in the United States. The survey consisted of 15 questions, 7 of which asked for a short answer input. Once again, I posted the survey on the internet via a survey collection site, and then emailed the link to each Bishop. The Bishop's were being asked about the education and spiritual development of children, youth and adults in the Church.

My final step was to talk with 25 youth and young adults one on one and collect their thoughts about religion, spirituality and the Church in general.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES

I fear John Wesley would be extremely disappointed in those who call themselves United Methodists in New England in the twenty first century. The Church has seemingly lost its creative edge. As a general rule, we're no longer going to where the people are, like Wesley and the circuit riders; we're hoping that people will come to us in our church buildings (and they're not). We're still teaching Sunday School like it's the 1950s and many congregations are having a hard time supporting a full time pastor. United Methodists not longer know why they're Methodists; what they stand for. Most Methodists aren't even sure what they don't stand for. Grace (prevenient, justifying or sanctifying) mercy and justice are words used when collecting money for a cause, not values to live by. The children and youth who attend church with their families play video games, read or sit and look bored during worship. Few churches include children and youth in any aspect of their services, let alone as part of the decision-making boards or committees.

I had to opportunity to interact with and listen to dozens of teens and youth during the last three years, listening to their opinions, hopes and dreams. We have spiritual children who are interested in, and want to worship God, but are unhappy with the way worship is happening in their churches. They want to be a *participant* in worship, not merely a spectator. They crave to be involved in every aspect of worship, and they yearn to hear a sermon that is relevant to them and their situations. Our children and youth have

been raised in a culture that rarely sits still. Music videos and twenty four hour a day channels have changed our children and youth into information junkies.

They hear what we are saying *about* God, but are frustrated because we are not leading by example, nor are we teaching them to experience God on their own. Young people do not believe in God simply because they are told to. They are often put off by the argumentative nature of both liberal and conservative theological views. Dan Kimball's book *They Love Jesus but Not the Church* clearly identifies what young people perceive as the contradictory nature of acting like Jesus vs. organized religion. We are telling them to love their neighbors, but we are too busy to help the elderly person next door clear the snow off their walkway. They are hearing 'be still and know that I am God', but our children are so over scheduled they barely have time to do their homework, let alone spend time listening for God. Youth today are spiritual, and long to know God and Jesus, but they are not hearing or seeing the message in a manner that they appreciate or absorb. The church must change its delivery system while making sure the message stays true to the Gospel in order to help today's youth grow into members of a church that is alive and striving to do the work of God here on earth.

During the course of my research, it became imminently clear that youth were not only missing out on youth group and worship opportunities, but that the Church as a whole (including both clergy and laity) had no understanding or model of catechesis for its members. As I inquired further, I discovered that few churches used the confirmation materials created by the United Methodist Publishing House, and fewer still required any sort of training or education for adults wishing to join the Church. It would seem that attending worship on a semi-regular basis is the only requisite for joining the United

Methodist Church.

I was privileged to have the opportunity to speak with leaders in both the Islamic and Jehovah Witness communities in Central Maine. Both representatives felt strongly that their success in keeping youth involved in their church and religious communities was due to consistent involvement. Their children and youth are kept involved with the community as a whole, not just activities created specifically for their age group. They also consider their faith to be a lifelong pursuit rather than just educating children, then graduating or aging out of a program. Children and youth are mentored by older members of the community and become mentors to those younger than they. Each community has a definitive structure and is quite rigid about the requirements of their community.

Children and youth want to belong, to participate and to experience God. We, as a church, need to support and guide them on their journey. We can do that by including them in all that we do as a church community. More specifically, we need to develop a catechetical model to assist them in their spiritual development and prepare them for life on their own. (see appendix C) We cannot expect any denomination that has forgotten their roots or lost their sense of direction to survive in our pluralistic world. John Wesley began his ministry over two hundred years ago to encourage people to experience God personally. He created small groups to hold members accountable and they quickly became leaders in social justice issues “And the fact that the Wesleyan movement was rooted in Scripture s a fact that should never be forgotten”¹

We, as United Methodists, have a rich tradition on which to draw. That same

¹ Paul Wesley Chilcote, *Recapturing the Wesley's Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004). 82.

history may set a standard that appears difficult to reach, but will no doubt provide us the tools necessary to “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” Proverbs 22:6.

The following pages represent the culmination of my research and discernment on how the United Methodist Church can better reach and serve the young people in its midst.

This is not a program that can be followed in hopes of saving Methodism or our youth. It is rather, a lifestyle change, a return to our roots: a return to the Methodism of John and Charles Wesley and to a catechetical model of the first century church. Dr. Gary Parrett and JI Packer remind us that the ‘basic ingredients of the catechism were never to be written down’.² A catechism is to be practiced, to be lived, not just memorized and recited. That is exactly what this catechetical model is proposing: a return to a living catechesis with a living, vibrant faith.

² J.I and Gary A. Parrett Packer, *Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010). 314.

APPENDIX A

**A Catechism in Community
for the
United Methodist Church**



Introduction

Catechism

cat-e-chism

[kat-i-kiz-uhm]

an elementary book containing a summary of the principles of the Christian religion. esp. as maintained by a particular church. in the form of questions and answers.

(dictionary.com)



What if we started looking at catechism in a different way....what if catechism became our life? Instead of memorizing answers to questions in a book, what if we fashioned our lives to answer those questions? The questions are deep and reflective of the very doctrines of Christianity. I am not suggesting we change the questions, but we do need to redefine the method in which we obtain the answers. The way people learn in the 21st century is vastly different than in past generations. People, especially young people, don't want to hear answers, they want to experience them, to be a part of them.



Let's make catechism a verb that involves the family, the congregation, and the community, beginning at birth and lasting throughout our whole lives.

I am proposing that we redefine the word catechism for 21 century Methodists. Catechism should be the life-long pursuit of a Christian life, not just a few months of rote memorization with little or no real understanding of the thought process. We are all catechumens our whole life. Learning the answers to questions does not make us Godly, Christ centered people; but living a life reflective of those answers does.

John Wesley said, "The Church changes the world not by making converts but by making disciples."

(<http://www.coregroups.org/threestrandmodel.html>)

Introduction

Birth/Cradle Roll

2-3 years old

5 year olds

2nd grade

9 years old

6-8 grade

Assigning a companion for the journey

9th grade

16 (or so)

Graduation

The Great Beyond

A Catechism in Community

It is time that all members of the United Methodist Church take seriously the words they recite each time a person is baptized. When the Pastor asks: *"Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and include these persons now before you in your care?"*. Members of the congregation respond: *"With God's help, we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround these persons with a community of love and forgiveness, that they may grow in their service to others. We will pray for them, that they may be true disciples who walk in a way that leads to life"*. We need to do just that.*The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville, TN: United Methodist Publishing House, 1990). p40

cat-e-chism

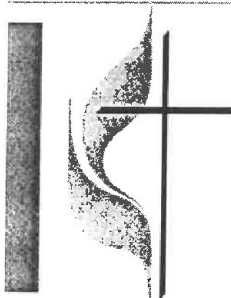
is derived from the Biblical word: *katēcheō* (a verb) which means to teach orally or instruct*.

Catechism has only been defined as a more inactive, question and answer format in the 20th century.

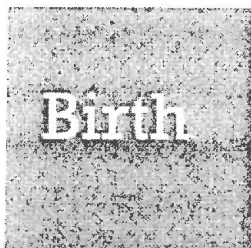
*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament By: Joseph Thayer

What does that mean? How do we help a child grow up socially, physically and spiritually? Have we been taking that charge seriously?

Living as a Christian is a life-long pursuit, and we are told numerous times in the Bible that we should **"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it"** Proverbs 22:6. Deuteronomy 4:9 says **"Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them."** The Bible is telling us that it is imperative that we teach our children the ways of God. In his book, the **Great Omission**, Dallas Willard tells us, "Jesus told us explicitly what to do. We have a manual, just like the car owner. He told us, as disciples, to make disciples. Not converts to Christianity, nor to some particular 'faith and practice'. He did not tell us to arrange for people to get in' or 'make the cut' after they die..."



This booklet will take us on a quick tour of a catechetical model that begins at birth and guides a child for the first two decades of his/her life. It is not perfect, nor is it comprehensive; it is merely an outline to be filled in by your church family, with your own traditions and experiences. The goal is not only to incorporate children and youth in worship, mission and the congregation throughout their life, but also to re-institute some 'milestones' giving kids things to look forward to as they grow. And, maybe, to help us all return to our roots of Methodism and disciple-making.

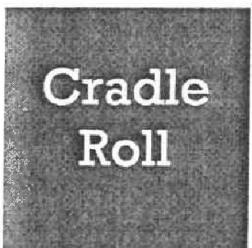


What do you do to recognize a new child born into your church family?

- † Place a candle on the altar
- † Put the child's name on your cradle roll*

How do you support the family with a new child?

- † Cook meals for the family
- † Offer to babysit giving Mom and Dad some time alone



How does your congregation celebrate baptism?

- † Give the family a wooden box to store memorabilia
- † Celebrate with a party after the service

What does your congregation do to help parents begin the faith journey with their new child?

Ask yourself:

Who do you have caring for your children during worship?

Are children, even the very young, welcome in your worship service? Why or why not?

What do you do (consciously or unconsciously) to welcome children in worship?

Does your church have a cradle roll?

How do you celebrate and keep track of the children on your cradle roll?

*Cradle roll is the list of infants/toddlers in your church. You may create something to hang on the wall of your nursery space, or just keep track of them with a list.

2-3 year olds

It's time to take your kids off the cradle roll!! Celebrate their growth with a special moment in a service. Take their marker off your cradle roll in the nursery and give it to the family; they'll be able to store it in their wooden box the child received when they were baptized. If they don't have a wooden box, give them one now!

Give the child their first picture Bible as they begin preschool Sunday School classes.

Begin their discipleship training now, it's not too early. Have them give their own offering each week; include them when you're giving of your time to the church or to a neighbor. Include them when you're greeting Sunday morning; help them begin to understand what it means to be part of a church family.



Talk to the parent about **The FAITH 5 (Faith Acts In The Home)** taken from Faith Inkubators

1. **SHARE** highs & lows of the day
2. **READ** and highlight a verse of Scripture in your Bible
3. **TALK** about how the verse relates to your highs & lows
4. **PRAY** for your highs & lows, for your family, and for the world
5. **BLESS** one another

Have the parents do this as a family each evening before bed.

Ask yourself:

What does your congregation do to make young children feel welcome and included?

Faith Inkubators / P.O. Box 2307/ Stillwater, MN 55082-3307 / 888.55.FAITH©Copyright 2008 - Faith Inkubators - All Rights Reserved.

<http://www.faithink.com/>

Starting school (5 year olds)

Starting school is as stressful for Mom and Dad as it is for the child! Have a special moment during worship not only to bless the child, but also pray for Mom and Dad. Give the new student a special something (a pencil, pencil box, or some other small school supply) to take to school with them.

Have a blessing of the backpacks for all school age kids to show the kindergarteners how important learning is.

Don't underestimate kids at this age....pray with them, talk to them about God. Read to them from the Bible – this is when they start learning the stories.

Ask yourself:

Think about when you were five years old.

What do you remember?

Do you remember what you learned at that age, or how people made you feel?

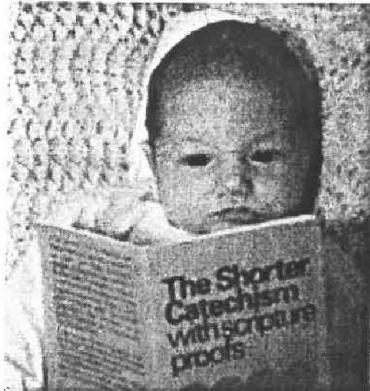
Scripture Memorization

There is certainly a great deal of debate about having children and youth memorize Scripture or creeds. On the one hand, in this age of electronic devices, it certainly is easy enough to find the words to just about anything within a few seconds. On the other hand, what if your child or young adult is stuck in a situation with no electronic access? It can (and will) happen. If they have not memorized anything from the Bible, they will have nothing to fall back on when they are frightened or overwhelmed. You can be sure your children know the words to their favorite song or rules to their favorite video game; why shouldn't they know the rules God has set forth for us to live by?

Start your memorization program when the kids are young. Make it fun for them by awarding prizes each time they memorize a story or verse. Then, as the children grow up and don't think it's 'cool' anymore, they already have a solid foundation of knowledge!

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Kindergarten Jesus Loves Me Christmas Story | Grade One The Lord's Prayer Creation Story | Grade Two 23 rd Psalm Psalm 119:11 |
| Grade Three Amazing Grace Psalm 139 Ten Commandments | Grade Four Books of the Bible | Middle School Nicene Creed John Newton's Story (author of Amazing Grace) |

These are merely suggestions. There is no hard and fast (at this point in time) set of Scriptures, hymns and /or creeds to be learned. It is important however, that kids learn some Scriptural basics. Becoming a disciple doesn't happen overnight, nor does it happen without effort; it is imperative that we begin teaching our children how to follow Jesus at a young age. Pick Scripture that teaches children how much God loves them, and that He will never leave them. The following pages suggest Scriptures to be memorized according to the Westminster Shorter Catechism.



The Westminster Shorter Catechism was written in the 1640s by English and Scottish theologians. The assembly also produced the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Westminster Larger Catechism. The three documents are considered by many Protestants to be the best doctrinal statements to come out of the English Reformation.

The purpose of the Shorter Catechism is to educate lay people in matters of doctrine and belief. It is shorter and easier; a simpler version for beginners. It is in a simple question and answer format to facilitate memorization. Typically, the parents and the church would use the shorter catechism to teach their children

John Wesley took teaching to both children and adults very seriously. Sunday Schools were instituted to instruct poor children who were not receiving Biblical instruction at home. Children were taught the fundamentals of Christian faith including the Ten Commandments, duty to God, salvation, sin, creeds and other topics deemed important to their spiritual growth and maturity. s

No one is suggesting rote memorization of the Westminster Shorter Catechism!

Remember, youth today want hands on learning. Don't have them just memorize information – show them how to incorporate it in every day life. Remind them it's not ok to use profanity on websites or at school; teach them to respect other people's property by involving them in some hands on ministry in the community. Keep them involved in church and the church community by supporting them in what they do.

The most effective way to train anyone is to provide concrete examples and then allow them to practice the skill themselves.....disciple your youth the same way!!

"If Christ is our life, then it follows that all our speech should be about him and that everything we do and think should be guided by his teaching, so that our soul should be formed in his image."

Basil the Great

A Catechism in Community

- Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?** A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.
1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.
- Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?** A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.
2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,
- Q. 3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?** A. The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.
Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,
- Q. 4. What is God?** A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.
Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, "I am who I am." This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.' "
- Q. 5. Are there more Gods than one?** A. There is but one only, the living and true God
Deuteronomy 6:4. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one
- Q. 6. How many persons are there in the Godhead?** A. There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.
Matthew 28:19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
- Q. 9. What is the work of creation?** A. The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.
Genesis 1:1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
The Creation Story
- Q. 10. How did God create man?** A. God created man male and female, after his own image in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures
Genesis 1 The Creation Story
- Q. 11. What are God's works of providence?** A. God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful, preserving, and governing, all his creatures, and all their actions.
Psalms 145:17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made.
- Q. 12. What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?** A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.
Genesis 2:17 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."
- Q. 13. Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?** A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God?
Ecclesiastes 7:29 This only have I found: God made mankind upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes."
- Q. 14. What is sin?** A. Sin is a transgression of, the law of God.
1 John 3:4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

Q. 15. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created? A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created was their eating the forbidden fruit.

Genesis 3:6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Genesis 3:12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

Q. 16. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression? A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

Q. 17. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind? A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—

Q. 18. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell? A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

James 1:14-15 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Q. 19. What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell? A. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

Matthew 25:41, 46. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.... And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal

Q. 21. Who is the Redeemer of mankind? A. The only Redeemer of mankind is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continues to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever.

Galatians 4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law,

Q. 22. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man? A. Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

Galatians 4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law,

Q. 23. What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer? A. Christ, as our Redeemer, executes the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

Isaiah 9:6-7 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this

Q. 24. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet? A. Christ executed the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

John 20:31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Q. 25. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest? A. Christ executed the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

Hebrews 2:17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

Q. 26. How doth Christ execute the office of a king? A. Christ executed the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Isaiah 33:22 For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us.

Q. 27. Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist? A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

Isaiah 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Q. 28. Wherein consisted Christ's exaltation? A. Christ's exaltation consisted in his rising again from the dead on the third day ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.

Ephesians 1:20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,

Q. 29. How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ? A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

Titus 3:5-6 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior,

Q. 30. How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ? A. The Spirit applied to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ.

Ephesians 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—

Ephesians 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,

Q. 32. What benefits do they that truly believe partake of in this life? A. They that truly believe do in this life partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.

Romans 8:30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Q. 33. What is justification? A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoned all our sins, and accepted us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Romans 3:24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

A Catechism in Community

Q. 35. What is sanctification? A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you^a to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

Q. 36. What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, and sanctification?

A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

Q. 37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death? A. The souls of believers pass into glory; and their bodies, do rest in their graves, till the resurrection.

Isaiah 57:2 Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death.

Q. 38. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection? A. At the resurrection, believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

Matthew 25:23 'His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

Q. 39. What is the duty which God requireth of man? A. The duty which God required of man, is obedience to his revealed will.

Micah 6:8 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Q. 40. What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience? A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law

Romans 10:5 Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them."

Q. 41. Wherein is the moral law summarily comprehended? A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.

Matthew 19:17 "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments."

Q. 42. What is the sum of the ten commandments? A. The sum of the ten commandments is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves.

Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Q. 43. What is the preface to the ten commandments? A. The preface to the ten commandments is in these words, *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage*

Exodus 20:2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Q. 44. What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us? A. The preface to the ten commandments teaches us, that because God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.

Luke 1:74-75 to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

Q. 45. Which is the first commandment? A. The first commandment is, *Thou shall have no other gods before me.*
Exodus 20:3. Thou shall have no other gods before me.

Q. 46. What is required in the first commandment? A. The first commandment required us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

Deuteronomy 26:17 You have declared this day that the LORD is your God and that you will walk in his ways, that you will keep his decrees, commands and laws, and that you will obey him.

Q. 47. What is forbidden in the first commandment? A. The first commandment forbade the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying, the true God as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.

Romans 1:25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

Q. 48. What are we specially taught by these words before me in the first commandment? A. These words *before me* in the first commandment teach us, that God, who sees all things, takes notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God.

Deuteronomy 30:17-18 but if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

Q. 49. Which is the second commandment? A. Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shall not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Exodus 20:4-6 "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand {generations} of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Q. 50. What is required in the second commandment? A. The second commandment required the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his Word

Deuteronomy 32:46 he said to them, "Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law.

Q. 51. What is forbidden in the second commandment? A. The second commandment forbade the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his Word.

Deuteronomy 12:31-32 You must not worship the LORD your God in their way, because in worshipping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the LORD hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods. See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.

Q. 52. What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment? A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he hath to his own worship.

Exodus 34:14 Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God.

Q. 53. Which is the third commandment? A. The third commandment is, *Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain.*

Exodus 20:7 "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name."

Q. 54. What is required in the third commandment? A. The third commandment required the holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, Word, and works.

Psalm 68:4 Sing to God, sing praise to his name, extol him who rides on the clouds — his name is the LORD — and rejoice before him.

Q. 55. What is forbidden in the third commandment? A. The third commandment forbade all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God makes himself known.

Malachi 2:2 If you do not listen, and if you do not set your heart to honor my name," says the LORD Almighty, "I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not set your heart to honor me

Q. 56. What is the reason annexed to the third commandment? A. The reason annexed to the third commandment is, that however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.

Deuteronomy 28:58-59 If you do not carefully follow all the words of this law, which are written in this book, and do not revere this glorious and awesome name—the LORD your God—the LORD will send fearful plagues on you and your descendants, harsh and prolonged disasters, and severe and lingering illnesses.

Q. 57. Which is the fourth commandment? A. The fourth commandment is, *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shall thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

Exodus 20:8 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy

Q. 58. What is required in the fourth commandment? A. The fourth commandment required the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his Word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to himself.

Deuteronomy 5:12-14 "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do.

Q. 59. Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath? A. Till the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world,

Genesis 2:2-3 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Q. 60. How is the Sabbath to be sanctified? A. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.

Exodus 20:8. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Q. 61. What is forbidden in the fourth commandment? A. The fourth commandment forbade the omission, or careless performance, of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.

Isaiah 58:13-14 "If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob." The mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Q. 62. What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment? A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the Sabbath day.

Exodus 20:9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

Exodus 20:11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Q. 63. Which is the fifth commandment? A. The fifth commandment is, *Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God gives thee.*

Exodus 20:12 "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

Q. 64. What is required in the fifth commandment? A. The fifth commandment required the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to everyone in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.

Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Q. 65. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment? A. The fifth commandment forbade the neglecting of, or doing anything against, the honor and duty which belonged to everyone in their several places and relations.

Matthew 15:4 For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.'

Q. 66. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment? A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is, a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.

Deuteronomy 5:16 "Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you

Q. 67. Which is the sixth commandment? A. The sixth commandment is, *Thou shalt not kill.*

Exodus 20:13. Thou shalt not kill

Q. 68. What is required in the sixth commandment? A. The sixth commandment required all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others.

Genesis 9:6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

Q. 69. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment? A. The sixth commandment forbade the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor, unjustly, or whatsoever tended thereunto.

Genesis 9:6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

Q. 70. Which is the seventh commandment? A. The seventh commandment is, *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

Exodus 20:14. Thou shalt not commit adultery

Q. 71. What is required in the seventh commandment? A. The seventh commandment required the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in thought, speech, and behavior.

1 Corinthians 7:2-3 But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.

Q. 72. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment? A. The seventh commandment forbade all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.

Ephesians 5:3-4 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

Q. 73. Which is the eighth commandment? A. The eighth commandment is, *Thou shall not steal.*
Exodus 20:15. Thou shall not steal.

Q. 74. What is required in the eighth commandment? A. The eighth commandment required the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.
Philippians 2:4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Q. 75. What is forbidden in the eighth commandment? A. The eighth commandment forbade whatsoever doth, or may, unjustly hinder our own, or our neighbor's wealth or outward estate.
Ephesians 4:28a. Let him that stole steal no more.

Q. 76. Which is the ninth commandment? A. The ninth commandment is, *Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*
Exodus 20:16. Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Q. 77. What is required in the ninth commandment? A. The ninth commandment required the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbor's good name, especially in witness-bearing.
Proverbs 14:5 A truthful witness does not deceive, but a false witness pours out lies.

Q. 78. What is forbidden in the ninth commandment? A. The ninth commandment forbade whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own, or our neighbor's, good name.
Psalms 15:3 and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellowman,

Q. 79. Which is the tenth commandment? A. The tenth commandment is, *Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.*
Exodus 20:17. Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's

Q. 80. What is required in the tenth commandment? A. The tenth commandment required full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor, and all that is his.
Hebrews 13:5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Q. 81. What is forbidden in the tenth commandment? A. The tenth commandment forbade all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.
Galatians 5:26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Q. 83. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous? A. Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.
Ezekiel 8:6 And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing—the utterly detestable things the house of Israel is doing here, things that will drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see things that are even more detestable."

Q. 84. What doth every sin deserve? A. Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.
Galatians 3:10 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."

Q. 85. What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse, due to us for sin? A. To escape the wrath and curse of God, due to us for sin, God required of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicated to us the benefits of redemption.

Acts 20:21 I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

Q. 86. What is faith in Jesus Christ? A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

Philippians 3:9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Q. 87. What is repentance unto life? A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.

1 Chronicles 7:14 if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Q. 88. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicated to us the benefits of redemption? A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicated to us the benefits of redemption are, his ordinances, especially the Word, sacraments, and prayer

Matthew 28:18-20 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Q. 89. How is the Word made effectual to salvation? A. The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching, of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.

2 Timothy 3:14-17 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **16**All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, **17**so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Q. 90. How is the Word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation? A. That the Word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer; receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.

Psalms 119:18 Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.

Q. 91. How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation? A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them: that by faith receive them.

1 Peter 3:21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Q. 92. What is a sacrament? A. A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

Genesis 17:7 I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.

Q. 93. Which are the sacraments of the New Testament? A. The sacraments of the New Testament are, baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Matthew 26:26-28 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body. "Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Q. 94. What is baptism? A. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

Galatians 3:27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Q. 95. To whom is Baptism to be administered? A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.

Acts 2:38-39 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Q. 96. What is the Lord's Supper? A. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace.

1 Corinthians 10:16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?

Q. 97. What is required for the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper? A. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

1 Corinthians 11:28-29 A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.

Q. 98. What is prayer? A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

1 John 5:14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

Q. 99. What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer? A. The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called the Lord's Prayer.

Matthew 6:9-13 "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. (Or from evil; some late manuscripts one, / for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.)

Q. 100. What doth the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us? A. The preface of the Lord's Prayer, which is, *Our Father which art in heaven*, teaches us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.

Matthew 6:9 "This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

Q. 101. What do we pray for in the first petition? A. In the first petition, which is, *Hallowed be thy name*, we pray that God would enable us, and others, to glorify him in all that whereby he makes himself known; and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

Matthew 6:9 "This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

Q. 102. What do we pray for in the second petition? A. In the second petition, which is, *Thy kingdom come*, we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed; and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it; and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

Matthew 6:10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Q. 103. What do we pray for in the third petition? A. In the third petition, which is, *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*, we pray that God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

Matthew 6:10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Q. 104. What do we pray for in the fourth petition? A. In the fourth petition, which is, *Give us this day our daily bread*, we pray that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.

Matthew 6:11 Give us today our daily bread.

Q. 105. What do we pray for in the fifth petition? A. In the fifth petition, which is, *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*, we pray that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

Matthew 6:12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Q. 106. What do we pray for in the sixth petition? A. In the sixth petition, which is, *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*, we pray that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

Matthew 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

Q. 107. What doth the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us? A. The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, which is, *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen*, teaches us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him and, in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen.

Matthew 6:13 for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

1 Corinthians 14:16 If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying?

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Matthew 6:13 for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

1 Corinthians 14:16 If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying?

Memorize these 10 points and you've covered questions 45-81!

"Wesley's *Rules of Society* plainly imply a much fuller account of the scheme of Christian duty than they contain. The rules are grouped under three heads—(1) Doing no Harm; (2) Doing Good; (3) Attending upon all the Ordinances of God. Under each head certain duties are specified, evidently as examples of many more unmentioned; and these examples were plainly chosen with a view to the evils particularly prevalent in Wesley's day. Thus, under the heading, *Doing no Harm*, it is stated that the members of the societies should "continue to evidence their desire of salvation by avoiding evil of every kind; especially that which is most generally practised. Such is"—

1. Taking the name of God in vain. 2. Profaning the Day of the Lord. 3. Drunkenness. 4. Fighting, quarrelling, etc. 5. Buying and selling uncustomed goods. 6. Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation. 7. Doing to others as we would not they should do to us. 8. Doing what we know is not for the glory of God, in wearing costly apparel, taking diversions, and reading. 9. Softness and needless self-indulgence. 10. Laying up treasures upon earth. 11. Borrowing without the probability of paying. Here we have no specific injunctions concerning breaches of the second, the fifth, the seventh, the ninth, or tenth commandments. Plainly these rules imply a more systematic teaching of the law of God than that which they contain. Methodist ministers are too often heard at the present time declaring that even these specimen rules of Christian conduct cannot be kept. Wesley declares that all of them are the commands of God, delivered in His Word, the only rule of our faith and practice. *If Wesley is right, those who seek to abolish the rules are aiming at rebellion and the subversion of the authority of the Most High. To be a Christian is a more serious undertaking than is generally supposed.*" (Wesley's Revision of the Shorter Catechism with Notes by Rev James Alex MacDonald Edinborough 1906. Page 82)

10 Commandments

One God
No idols
Honor God's name
Keep the Sabbath holy
Honor your mother and father
No murder
No adultery
No stealing
No lying
Don't covet your friend's stuff

Questions #99 through #107 have to do with the Lord's Prayer.

Once you memorized these 2 quick sets of information, you've completed 47 questions!!!

2nd grade

Children have typically started to read on their own by the time they have finished second grade. Most United Methodist congregations give their graduating second graders a new Bible that they can use to follow along with in Sunday School and worship.

Encourage families to read from this new Bible during the FAITH 5 nightly. Reading is exciting for kids....share in their excitement!

Children at this age are like little sponges. They absorb knowledge very quickly and are usually excited to learn. Use this period of time to have them memorize Scripture. Teach them the stories in the Bible as well as some key Scripture verses. Help them understand what they are learning-if they understand it, they'll own it- whereas if they are just memorizing something, they will soon forget it. Have them start with simple verses, then move up to more complicated verses and stories. Don't forget to include things like the 23rd Psalm, the Lord's Prayer, the Beatitudes and the books of the Bible. Memorizing Scripture and hymns may seem like a waste of time in this electronic age, but there are times, when you're alone and frightened and an electronic gadget may not be handy. The 23rd Psalm and/or one of those 'old-time hymns' come in very handy on those occasions!

Make Scripture memorization a game. Give kids prizes for each verse/story they can recite. It will be fun and the rewards will last a lifetime!!

Ask yourself:

How does your congregation feel about Scripture memorization?

John and Charles Wesley used hymns as a method of teaching children and adults Scriptural truths. They published several volumes containing hymns and prayers between 1741 and 1790. Charles Wesley wrote over 6000 hymns and was one of the most prolific poets in the English language.

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Hark the herald angels sing "Glory to the newborn King! Peace on earth and mercy mild God and sinners reconciled" Joyful, all ye nations rise Join the triumph of the skies With the angelic host proclaim: "Christ is born in Bethlehem" Hark! The herald angels sing "Glory to the newborn King!" Christ by highest heav'n adored Christ the everlasting Lord! Late in time behold Him come Offspring of a Virgin's womb Veiled in flesh the Godhead see Hail the incarnate Deity Pleased as man with man to dwell Jesus, our Emmanuel Hark! The herald angels sing "Glory to the newborn King!" Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Son of Righteousness! Light and life to all He brings Ris'n with healing in His wings Mild He lays His glory by Born that man no more may die Born to raise the sons of earth Born to give them second birth Hark! The herald angels sing "Glory to the newborn King!"

When teaching children and youth hymns or songs, be sure the hymns are describing, worshipping or teaching about God. There are many, many songs out there today that while called Christian are merely talking about how 'I worship' or 'I feel'.....we want to be teaching about God, not about 'I'.

And don't be fooled, though some of the hymns may seem 'stodgy', I have personally been in an auditorium with 14,000 youth singing and dancing to Crown Him with Many Crowns - it's all in how you go about it!

Come, thou long expected Jesus

Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.

O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace!

My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honors of Thy name.

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of canceled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.

He speaks, and, listening to His voice,
New life the dead receive,
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
The humble poor believe.

Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb,
Your loosened tongues employ;
Ye blind, behold your Savior come,
And leap, ye lame, for joy.

9 year olds

"For Wesley, there was no religion but social religion, no holiness but social holiness. In other words, faith always includes a social dimension. One cannot be a solitary Christian. As we grow in faith through our participation in the church community, we are also nourished and equipped for mission and service to the world. "

Excerpt from *Who Are We?: Doctrine, Ministry, and the Mission of The United Methodist Church*, Revised: Leader's Guide by Kenneth L. Carder, (Cokesbury), p. 55.



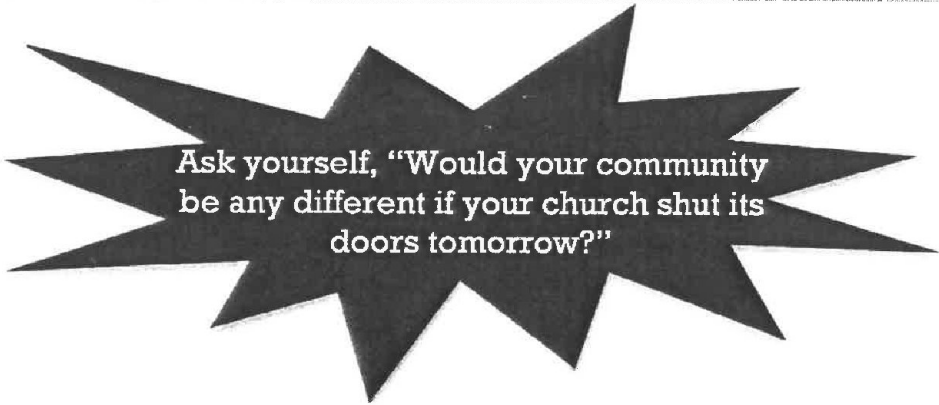
Your kids may already be involved in serving others, but make it formal. Give them a basin and towel explaining it represents Christ washing the feet of His disciples. Help them understand Matthew 23:10-12: **Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. All the greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.** It's not easy to understand the juxtaposition, but kids love to help. Engage them in your clothing swaps, cooking for people who are sick or even visiting people who are house bound.

Ask yourself:

What does your church do to include kids in servant ministry and mission work?

"From Wesley's time to the present, Methodism has sought to be both a nurturing community and a servant community. Members of Methodist Societies and class meetings met for personal nurture through giving to the poor, visiting the imprisoned, and working for justice and peace in the community. They sought not only to receive the fullness of God's grace for themselves; but...they saw themselves as existing 'to reform the nation...and to spread scriptural holiness over the land'"

Excerpt from *Who Are We?: Doctrine, Ministry, and the Mission of The United Methodist Church*, Revised: Leader's Guide by Kenneth L. Carder, (Cokesbury), p. 55.



Ask yourself, "Would your community
be any different if your church shut its
doors tomorrow?"

In his book, *Change the World*, Michael B. Slaughter says that "Jesus' mission centers on three Biblical mandates that define the mission operative for the church."

I. The Great Requirement

He has shown all you
people what is good.
And what does the
Lord require of you?
To act justly and to
love mercy and to walk
humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

II. The Great Commandment

My command is this:
Love one another as I
have loved you.
Greater love has no
one than this: to lay
down one's life for
one's friends.

John 15:12-13

III. The Great Commission

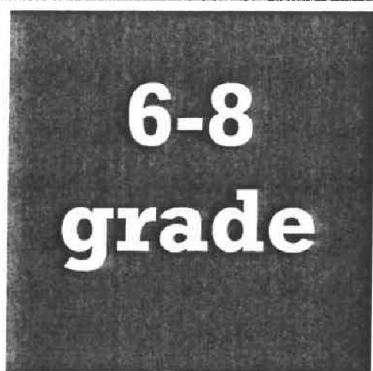
All authority in heaven
and earth has been
given to me. Therefore
go and make disciples
of all nations, baptizing
them in the name of the
Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit,
and teaching them to
obey everything I have
commanded you.

Matthew 28:18-20

What does your church follow for 'mission operatives'? How are you teaching your children and youth to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?

"Religion that honors God is religion with feet"

Michael B Slaughter. *Change the World: Recovering the Message and Mission of Jesus*



Sixth grade is typically when youth in the United Methodist Church are confirmed into their local church congregation. The United Methodist Church website says: "Confirmation refers to the decision a person makes to respond to God's grace with intentional commitment, publicly reaffirming his or her baptismal vows before the congregation." Most confirmands are youth between the ages of eleven and fourteen, who

have been nurtured in the church since their baptism as an infant or young child. Most churches offer a deliberate time of preparation before this service. During confirmation class, confirmands learn about the meaning of Christian faith; the history and teachings and The United Methodist Church; and an explanation of the baptismal and membership vows they will be professing. This is also the time to really emphasize becoming disciples.

While it is true that most churches offer a confirmation class, many are only a few weeks or months. The UMC publishing house is in the process of re-writing their confirmation material, updating it and adding online components. Take advantage of the knowledge and experience of the United Methodist Publishing House!

Your children have been praying for their families and each other, been helping hands at church and doing God's work in the community for years. Now is the time to formally introduce them to the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, study and service. They're in the habit of doing these things, now take the time to explain why!

Don't sell your youth short at this important juncture on their lives. They are more than capable of a deep, living faith; challenge them, walk with them and help their faith grow. Teach them about the structure of the UM Church with its connectional system, UMCOR, Africa University and all that goes along with being United Methodist. Check with Cokesbury for confirmation materials; UMC.org has a wealth of information about church structure, leadership and missions.

Ask yourself:

Do you know what your church does for confirmation?

9th Grade

Many young people look forward to high school with all of its perceived freedoms and excitement, only to become quickly disillusioned and overwhelmed once they get there. The incidence of cutting and suicide increase in young people in grades 9-12. A nationwide survey of youth in grades 9-12 in public and private schools in the United States (U.S.) found that 15% of students reported seriously considering suicide*. High School can be a lonely place no matter how well adjusted your teen seems.

+
Ninth grade is when nearly all young people begin one of the most exciting yet frightening stages of their life: high school.



There is no more important time than now to have a support system in place for your young people.

Encourage your high schoolers to be active participants in church life. They will be busy, no doubt, but schedule around them to include them. Attend the events that are important to them, and assign them a spiritual companion to walk with them through these tumultuous and exciting high school years. Don't forget to include youth in your mission work. Young people this age do not have time to 'meet for the sake of meeting', but if they feel strongly about an issue or cause, they will make the time to participate and make a difference.

Ask yourself:

Are events at your church scheduled to encourage participation of your youth?

*<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/suicide/youthsuicide.htm>

Assigning a companion for the journey

Training is essential for your adult companions. Teach them the basics:

- † Don't force the relationship; let it develop slowly
- † Remember safe sanctuary policies
- † Don't judge the youth or try to change them (but don't encourage sinful behavior)
- † Focus on helping the youth attain high standards, but don't forget, you are not their parent
- † Meet them where they are – go watch their band concerts, sporting events or other school functions
- † Pray for the youth
- † Don't forget it's Jesus we want them to emulate, not us
- † Don't tell them 'when I was young' unless they ask
- † Encourage them
- † Celebrate their accomplishments
- † Listen, listen, listen

Why a companion
rather than a mentor?

A mentor infers an
unequal relationship.

Kids have plenty of
those in their lives. A
companion is someone
they can talk to, go to
with questions or
problems, and
(hopefully) learn from.

Recruit spiritual companions from your church congregation. They should be people who enjoy being with youth and are not 'over scheduled' themselves. They should be available for training, and be willing to give of their time freely to their youthful companion.

Ask yourself:

Are we using 'mentors' or 'companions' in our youth programs?

Driver's License



Few events in a young person's life stir so much anticipation for the youth yet so much fear and dread for the parent as the driver's license. A driver's license is not only a rite of passage, but also a perceived 'ticket to freedom' for youth.

Pray for peace for the parents as well as wisdom for the youth. Give the young person a key fob that they will actually use so they will be reminded of the church family praying for them every time they turn the key in the ignition. Talk to the parents; be available for them when they are nervous and just need someone to listen. Letting go isn't always easy; help them deal with that anxiety.

Most importantly, be available for the new driver. Let them know they can call people in the congregation 24/7. Sometimes a young person will make a poor decision putting them in a dangerous situation. If they know they have someone to help, they'll take advantage of that, rather than continue along a hazardous path.

Ask yourself:

Does your congregation pray for its newly licensed drivers?

Is your church family available to its teens when they may have 'gotten in over their heads'?

Is your church family truly available 24/7 for its teens?

Graduation

Graduation is the end of one chapter and beginning of another in a young person's life. It can be a very frightening time for the graduate, as well as a anxious time for the parents. There are so many decisions to be made about school, jobs and careers, that it can seem overwhelming. Parents may be preparing for an empty nest, or just be dreading one of their children moving away.

Whether the graduate moves on to college, the military or just moves away, it will be a trying time for both parents and graduates alike.

Have the members of the congregation make prayer blankets for the graduates to take with them as they continue on their journey. Don't worry if they're not going to school right away, everyone can use an extra blanket! It can be any type of blanket, nothing fancy- just pray for the graduate and their family as it's being made. The blessing service for the graduates can be at the end of the school year. Bless both the youth going as they go off to start the next chapter of their life and the parents when it's time for the youth to leave. Then, don't forget about them once they've left. Keep in touch with the youth; and be there for the parent(s). They all need the support of their church family!

Ask yourself:

What's your congregation doing for its graduates and their families?

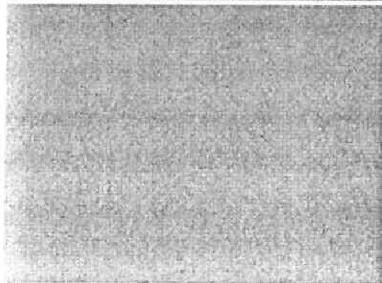


Have we taught our children how to live in community with one another?

Ephesians 4:1-7 I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Stetzer noted, "Teens are looking for more from a youth ministry than a holding tank with pizza.

"They look for a church that teaches them how to live life. As they enter young adulthood, church involvement that has made a difference in their lives gives them a powerful reason to keep attending."



The United Methodist Church is a 'connectional church' which contrary to popular thought, affords its members great opportunities for education, involvement and service. The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) collects emergency kits and stockpiles them until they are needed when disaster has struck somewhere in the world. These kits may contain personal hygiene items or items necessary to clean up after storms or other natural disasters.

Every four years, the United Methodist Division on Youth and Young People hosts the Global Young People's Convocation. These legislative gatherings allow youth and young people a voice in the decision making process. In 2006, they gathered in South Africa; in 2010 over 500 youth and young people gathered for 5 days in Berlin, Germany to discuss issues that affect the United Methodist Church as a whole.

National youth gatherings are also held within the United States every four years. These gatherings feature workshops, speakers, music, worship and the opportunity for youth to meet and befriend others youth who live on the other side of the continent. With the popularity of the social networking sites, the youth are able to maintain close connections with others the same age who share their faith.

Let us be clear on this. Christianity is not in essence a moral code or ascetic routine, as so many down the centuries have mistakenly supposed. Rather, it is a supernaturalizing personal relationship with a supernatural personal Savior.

Parrett, Gary & J.I. Packer Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old Fashioned Way, 2010 location 116-25.

That being said, how are we teaching our children and youth to live following the example of Christ?

Are we teaching them to be judgmental, or are we modeling a lifestyle of acceptance and love?

Are we asking them to memorize countless Bible verses and Bible stories or are we teaching them to apply God's principles to their life situation?

We, as a church must not forget that being a disciple of Christ is a lifelong commitment to learning and growing.

Some definitions:

Baptism

From the beginning, baptism has been the door through which one enters the church. It was inconceivable to many that one could respond to God's grace by reciting the renunciations, affirming one's faith in Christ and loyalty to the Kingdom, without joining the fellowship of those who are committed to mature in that faith. As the "Body of Christ" in the world, baptism commissions us to use our gifts to strengthen the church and to transform the world. (UMC.org)

Blessing

"To be blessed" means "to be favored by God". The invoking of God's favor upon a person. (dictionary.com)

Catechism

A catechism is a summary or exposition of doctrine, traditionally used in Christian religious teaching from New Testament times to the present. (Wikipedia)

Confirmation

Confirmation refers to the decision a person makes to respond to God's grace with intentional commitment, publicly reaffirming his or her baptismal vows before the congregation (UMC.org)

Cradle Roll

The Cradle Roll ministry is a ministry for families of little ones from birth until they begin Sunday School. Babies are enrolled in this program as soon as the church learns of their birth or date of baptism.

Disciple

By definition, a disciple is a follower, one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another. A Christian disciple is a person who accepts and assists in the spreading of the good news of Jesus Christ (dictionary.com)

Koinonia

Is the anglicisation of a Greek word (κοινωνία) that means communion by intimate participation. The word is used frequently in the New Testament to describe the relationship within the early Christian Church.... (Wikipedia)

Safe Sanctuaries Policy

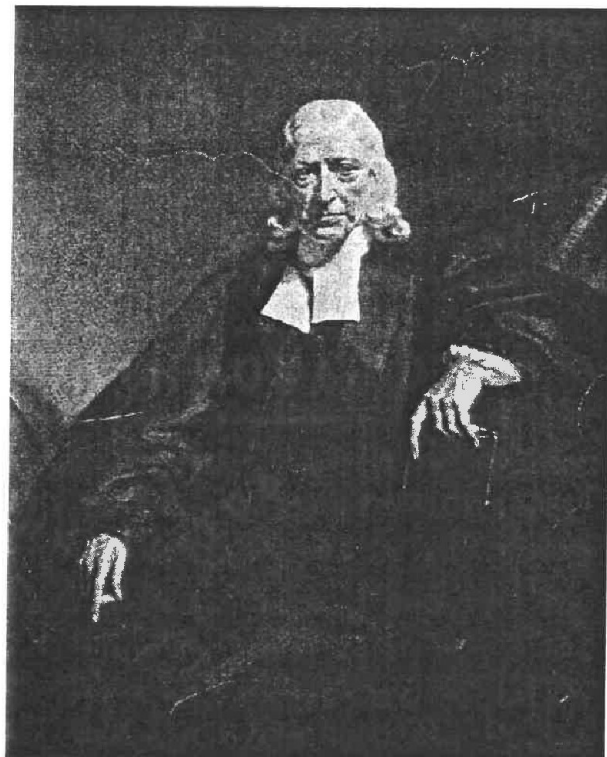
Safe Sanctuaries is the title of the guidebook to "Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church" written by United Methodist deacon and lawyer Joy Thornburg Melton and published by Discipleship Resources in 1998. "Safe Sanctuaries" is the name commonly given by local United Methodist Annual Conferences and local churches to their individual efforts to make conference and local church programs both welcoming and safe for children. <http://www.safesantuaries.org/faq/index.html#number1>

**"What
then, is the
mark?"**

John Wesley

| Date | Event |
|-----------|---|
| 1703 | Born |
| 1720 | Entered Christ Church, Oxford |
| 1724 | Became Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford |
| 1724 | Became Anglican Priest |
| 1729-1735 | Holy Club |
| 1735-1737 | Georgia |
| 1737 | Met Moravian Peter Bohler |
| 1738 | Aldersgate Street Experience (Moravian meeting, mostly Moravians present) Luther's preface |
| 1739 | Met Evangelical preacher George Whitefield Started preaching outdoors to the masses. |
| 1743 | Wrote Rules for Methodist Societies |
| 1784 | Ordained Methodist ministers for the United States |
| 1791 | Died |

When asked "What then, is the mark? Who is a Methodist, according to your own account?" John Wesley replied: "I answer: A Methodist is one who has 'the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him;' one who 'loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength. God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul; which is constantly crying out, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee! My God and my all! Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever!'" (umc.org)



APPENDIX B

SURVEY FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Raw data collect from the survey

1. What is your gender

| | |
|--------|-------|
| male | 39.4% |
| female | 60.6% |

2. How old are you?

| | |
|-------|-------|
| 10-13 | 15.2% |
| 14-16 | 48.5% |
| 17-21 | 18.2% |
| 22+ | 18.2% |

3. What denomination do you belong to?

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| Catholic | 0.0% |
| Methodist | 87.9% |
| Congregational | 3.0% |
| Lutheran | 0.0% |
| Episcopalian | 0.0% |
| None | 4.5% |
| Other | 4.5% |

4. Have you been baptized?

Yes 95.4%

No 3.1%

I'm not sure 1.5%

5. Are you a member of your Church?

Yes 88.3%

No 13.6%

I'm not sure 6.1%

6. Do you consider yourself to be a spiritual person?

Yes 85.0%

No 6.7%

I'm not sure what you mean 8.3%

7. Do you believe in a higher power?

Yes 98.4%

No 1.6%

Please explain:

- God is the only higher power there is
- I believe that the Lord saved us from our sins and watches over us throughout our lives.
- I believe in God
- How can one be a Christian and not?

worse. If it is for the worse then we learn from it and if it is for the

- yes, there is a reason things happen the way to they do.
- yes it is a part of life that people gain and lose power for that's part of being human people fight for power and pride in everyday life
- I believe there is a "God" who watches over us all. I do not believe he is male or female, nor do i believe the story of Adam and Eve. I feel that as humans God has given us the gift of intelligence, and the things that we were told in the bible needed to be accepted as fact years ago. Now, with our intelligence we can go beyond the bible (still hold it dear of course) but still be able to look to our head and not always our heart or God for answers.
- I believe that there is a higher power or God out there that forgives us for all sins when we die if we are willing to accept Him into our lives
- JESUS WHO DIED ON THE CROSS FOR US AND HIS FATHER
- I believe that there is a higher power that come to help us whenever we need it, but also lets us go when it is our time.
- god
- i believe in god
- If it's a higher power, like God, than yes I believe he's there and that he's bigger and more powerful than all of us.
- I believe in God and his son jeusus and the holy spirit
- I Believe in God, who is the father, his son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spririt
- because if there wasn't a higher power then how did all the religioions come about in the world in the b.c.ara

- I believe God plans things to happen for a reason.
- God is my creator
- I beleive in Jesus Christ because I have seen what He has done in my life.
- I believe that there is a God looking after us all
- heaven
- I see my higher power as an essence that supports me day in and day out. loving and all-knowing
- I believe in the holy trinity, god as the father, God in the human form as Jesus Christ and Saviour, and God in the form of the Holy Ghost[Spirit] on Earth with man in the present. God IS love, to love is to share God. I am not in control of my own life nor any others', as God has the ultimate say. We are given opportunity to choose between sin and service. I try my best to choose service.
- I believe that there is someone, or something for that matter, that controls what happens on earth.
- I've been brought up as a Methodist, and that's just how I was raised. However, now that I'm older I've come to realize it to be true, and after coming back from a mission trip I've just been on, my faith is stronger than ever
- I believe in a creator who is devine. I believe in Christ the Son The higher power is God and without God there would be nothing.

8. Do you believe in God?

| | |
|-----|-------|
| Yes | 88.9% |
| No | 0.0% |

Not the way my parents do 11.1

- He is my everything
- look to previous statement
- i believe in a different faith than my parents
- I believe god isnt "up there" but instead, in everyone. (their souls and spirit)
- yupp
- What a beautiful grace to be able to know, and love God.
- I'm still trying to figure out exactly who God is to me.
- I believe in God. My dad does not really. And my mom believes in God as
- the Divine Father. I believe in a feminine counterpart (perhaps wisdom?).

8. Please explain briefly what you believe in

- I believe in God.
- trinity etc
- God and Jesus mean so much to me and he is the only thing I believe in.
- I believe in God.
- God sent Jesus to die to save us.
- I believe that there is a God. I believe that he had a son named Jesus. I believe in Heaven and Hell Jesus. I believe in Heaven and Hell and that if you are a genuinely good person that you will have eternal life after death.

- The trinity; Heaven and Hell
- Sprituallity is built in us by God the creator; He is present anywhere or everywhere and any given time. He wants to love and be loved by Him.
- Christ is the only way to him.
- I believe is Jesus Christ, the Almighty Father, who came to save us from our sins.
- Although baptized into the catholic church, I don't follow the strict beliefs of the church. I prefer to attend the methodist service with family friends. I know that god is there looking out for each and every one of us. and everything happens for a reason.
- That god made us and that Jesus died to save us.
- god
- I do beleive in him with whenever I need him he is always their for me
- Well, im not really sure why I believet his. I supose I took something I was told is fact, then did some searching within myself, warpingthis "truth" into my own reality. I am just as religious as an other methodist, i just dont see myself as more open minded.
- i honestly do not know because there is so much scientific information to disprove the thought of God
- I believe in God and that Jesus was the Lamb and our saviour and if we except Him into our lives, we will be forgiven for all sins when we die and get admited into Heaven
- JESUS

- That Jesus died for our sins
- I believe in some higher power. I believe there is a God that helps us every day of our lives.
- i belive in the father the son and the holy ghost the all mighty
jesus being crucified resurrected and rising again
- i belive in god
- I believe in a higher power but not quite sure what that is
- I believe in God, Heaven, and Jesus coming years ago.
- I'm not sure what to believe right now.
- I believe in the Father [God]the son [Jesus Christ] and the Holy Spirit
- i believe there is a god and that there are things that can be
imagined in real life and really do
exist only people are too dumb and think that if there is a book written
and its in the fiction section then it isn't realy when i really can be real
- God and Jesus
- Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose again, so that the sins of the
world would be forgiven. It is only through a relationship with Jesus
Christ that we can get to heaven, because our sin separates us from
God. Jesus is the bridge that connects us.
- I believe in God but I would like to believe that he is the type of God
that the Jews knew. A god that walked and talked with them, a nice
and friendly god. Not a mean God that purposly hurts bad people, but
rather the bad things that happen are good in some way.

- I am a very spiritual person. I am religious, but not that religious. I go to church and believe in God, but as I said before, I believe God isn't "up there" but instead, in everyone. (their souls and spirit)
- Yes I do believe in God.
- I believe that there is a God and a heaven and that everyone will go to heaven when they die
- GOD AND HEAVEN AND THAT IF WE ARE GOOD IN THIS LIFE WE WILL GO TO HEAVEN
- I believe that Christ is my Lord and Savior and that eternal life is possible, as are all things, through Him.
- God is the creator, Jesus the savior, spirit the mediator. Three in one. I have been saved only by Jesus' death and resurrection as payment for my sins and I have done nothing to deserve it. I am saved by my faith in God.
- I believe in the power of God and
- Jesus.
- Our salvation is by God's abundant Grace through our faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- Don't believe in God as a supernatural person.
- God is three persons in one. God, the Father created the world, God the Son became human to offer us salvation and to teach us how God wants us to live, and God the Holy Spirit lives with us and in us. God wants to be in relation with all His creation and with each human being.

- Jesus Christ the savior As I said, I've searched for the true God and found that God lead me to Himself, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. I have seen what life is like with and without them.
- I believe that God is there to look after us and point us to the right path, but the doesnt force you. You can choose for yourself.
- heaven and god
- I believe that there is God and that Jesus Christ lived.
- I believe that there is a God, but you can call him Allah or God or Brahma...it's all equal and the same in the end
- I think I have a mixed belief system that incorporates Buddhist beliefs with Christianity. I am definitely influenced by the idea of kharma, but believe in a God and Jesus Christ.
- I believe that God is creator of the heavens and the universe. He designed the world for his own purpose, not for man's sinful passions. Life on Earth is but a fraction of our true spiritual lives with God. I live to serve my Lord so that I may recieve his grace of eternal life in heaven filled with bliss and unimaginable beauty. I have faith, i believe in something i cannot tangibly feel or see but know with more hope and passion than onecan fathom.
- I don't know.
- I believe in God, Jesus and the fact that we could go to heaven or hell. I believe in the bible and that the teachings and stories in it are true.
- I believe that God is the Light of the World

- i believe that there is a god and he helps us and heals us.
- What is written of in the Bible. i believe that God guides our paths and that everything happens for a reason because of this.
- That Jesus Christ was born ,lived and went to the cross so that all of humanity would be forgiven of their sins. It was an act of Grace from God.
- I believe in God, I'm just not sure to what degree, I guess you could say. I believe in miracles, having had an experience with them. I believe in the power of prayer.
- I believe that God is the only god, that Jesus, His son, is my Savior, and that I should try and build His kingdom here on earth and follow in Jesus' footsteps. My faith has been strengthened by my mission trip, and I think that I've learned a lot from the people there about how to be more Christ-like.
- I believe in God but I don't believe that everyone spend eternity with him
- I believe that God is our creator, I believe that Christ is part of God. I believe that everyone regardless of belief or life style is a sacred life. I believe that God's greatest gift to us is life and the earth. I believe we are destroying his greatest gift.
- forgiveness
- I believe God created and still creates everything. He controls everything and everyone.

- I just did.
- I believe in the Father, the son and the Holy Spirit

9. Does church/worship interest you? Please explain:

Yes 81.7%

No 18.3%

- It does, but at this point in my life, I do find it pretty bland. But I enjoy sunday school and youth group.
- I love going to church every Sunday and just worshipping with other people who believe in the same thing as I.
- it intrests me but I don't go to church nearly as much as I should
- yes it does somethings when i'm not completly bored of it
- Id rather be in service than Sunday school
- The atmosphere and people of the church are what continue to inspire me to go every Sunday
- COULD BE LIVELIER BUT IT'S OKAY
- I enjoy church, but it doesn't come to one of my interests.
- sometimes
- i learn a lot each time
- I'm not insanelly involved all the time with everything, but I still like it and appretiate it.
- The sermons, songs, scripture, prayer
- i lose intrest when the serman gets soo long

- If I could understand it more, and it wasn't as boring.
- I actually listen to the sermon and see how it reflects in real life
- Sort of
- I like the structure
- sometimes

10. What is worship to you? Please explain:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| A time to connect with God | 78.2% |
| A time I can just sit and think | 38.2% |
| Nothing special | 9.1% |
| A time to zone out | 9.1% |

- helps me work out my life's issues
- sometimes when I hear the same thing over and over again it gets
- boring, but I'm mostly interested
- I don't know.
- I like the community aspect of going to church/youth group
- I have grown up with church. I feel bad not going.
- I love active and excited worship
- I love going to church because of all my friends there and the music and stuff.
- I find most parts to be interesting.
- I've considered becoming a pastor, but am still unsure.
- mostly worship at camp Mechuwa

11. Do you enjoy the worship services you attend?

- Not always. The services are directed towards adults. At times, it is interesting, but much of the time it's like school or something.
- The true answer is yes and no. not one or the other
- not really
- There good but I have to admit that I don't really listen all the time.
- I enjoy some of the worship services I attened and some I do not.
- A little

12. How often do you attend church services?

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| pretty much every week | 78.7% |
| at least once a month | 8.2% |
| every few weeks | 6.6% |
| a couple times a year | 4.9% |
| whenever my parents make me | 1.6% |
| I don't go to worship services | 0.0% |

13. What do you like most about worship?

| | Favorite |
|------------|----------|
| Music | 42.6% |
| Communion | 17.6% |
| The sermon | 16.0% |

| | |
|-----------|-------|
| Prayer | 14.8% |
| Scripture | 9.0% |

14. What do you like least about worship? Please explain:

| | Least Favorite |
|-----------|----------------|
| Scripture | 32.6% |
| Sermon | 29.9% |
| Music | 16.8% |
| Prayer | 11.3% |
| Communion | 9.4% |

- I really don't have a least favorite. They all help me connect with God.
- Because I get distracted and figity and then loose interest in the topic.
- It's just so lengthy, and makes the service go by so much slower.
- It is not very important
- it puts me to sleep sometimes
- it really isnt needed i guess. I go to church to hear the sermon, think
about how it applies to my life and then act upon my decision, not to eat
muffins and drink coffee.
- I need it to be enjoyable not dull.
- Sometimes it can be rather boring and seem to last a little too long for me.
- it is not right for me they dont know how to set the tone
- somtimes they dont really catch my attention

- there long
- I know they're very good and all, but I'm usually talking with my friends in the Youth Group or something, instead of listening.
- I believe just reading from a paper means nothing, but being creative and improving is more interesting
- sometimes it can get too long
- Its very boring.
- I dont like speaking in front of people.
- i dont know i couldnt really think of one that i liked the least
- BORING AND IT DOES MEAN ANYTHING TO ME
- it is hard to connect with it.
- Because im really not old enough to like/ Enjoy the sermons because of the things that i call exiting are totally different then church.
- Having to get up and sit and get up and sit.
- I can't focus when someone else prays for me
- monotone and emotionless preachers, and sad faces on the congregation.
- Too long and it's boring.
- I like the message that it gives but sometimes its really REALLY long.
- I do not usually get what he is saying.
- i dont really understand what it all means
- i have allergies that prevent me from eating the same communion as
 - everyone else or sometimes eating it at all. it makes me feel really awkward

- and different that i have to eat something different.
- I have a hard time concentrating long enough to get anything out of it.
- Our music is very bad, played very slow, song very poorly not really part of our new generation
- Sometimes the music choices aren't well planned and I like everything to be organized
- Music is dull. One of the regular readers (he read on Christmas Eve too!) reads in monotone. Some food will look good and then be dry and stale.

15. In what environment do you feel closest to God?

- | | |
|--|--------|
| ○ in church | 34.08% |
| ○ time home alone | 22.78% |
| ○ outdoors (at a Camp or retreat center) | 21.6% |
| ○ at a youth rally/retreat | 21.6% |

16. Would you like to have a consistent role in worship?

If yes, what would that role be?

| | |
|-----|-------|
| Yes | 79.7% |
| No | 20.3% |

- Having parts in the worship every week.
- It's important for youth to not only have a consistent role in worship, but actually make it part of their lives.
- I don't really know. I just think that perhaps it would give us more reason to be there and pay attention to what we learn.

- Active
- Take part of leading the music, or helping with Communion (it would make it go by way faster!)
- Reading, acolytes, church school, etc.
- Well both. A person must decide whether or not to believe. It is not right for parents to force their children into their faith. I personally was brought up in the church I go to now, but decided on my own to continue going. I think that generally speaking, yes youth should grow up and mature in the way I have at such a young stage in my life, but I wouldn't count on it any time soon.
- Possible sermon readings/lay readings
- They can do whatever they feel comfortable with and whatever the church will offer them.
- to run the music
- maybe a sermon or to do a skit in relation to the bible
- communion
- Well, we used to have a Youth choir, and it's not like we're completely ignored, we are part of it sometimes depending on what we had been doing recently. For example, a trip or a fund raiser.
- anything to show my love towards God
- Acolyte, usher, preach, read a scripture, greet
- reading scripture
- just showing up and participating.

- Our church already has a consistent role for youth in the church.
- a an usher or a greeter just to talk to the rest of the congregation
- I would like them to be involved in leadership of the services at church like they are able to at the camps and retreats I attend.
- help adults connect to the younger generation
- our pastor involves youth in everything - from lighting candles to helping to serve communion
- reading , singing, drama.
- any role, even if its just being the greeter. As long as they are involvede
- whatever suits their
- as lay readers
- I want to be a youth minister. I believe the youth should have studies, games, fellowship, lay reads, and what ever their hearts desire.

17. What would you do differently if you were in charge of worship or could create your own style of worship?

- I would talk more about our relationship with God instead of God in general.
- I wouldn't change much. I would try to incorporate more of the lessons into real life. I would want the youth to want to learn about God.
- more deep messages
- More music! I think that music is one of those things that helps you feel like the world is too good of a place to have no higher power.
- too much to mention

- More modern music and time to think and reflect.
- I would really try to modernize it, and really build up a strong worship team/praise band. As much as I love the Hymns, even if it happened just once a month, that'd be so cool.
- make it more family oriented, have a service just long enough to hold everyones (including three olds) attention and then send the children to sunday school.
- Make it easier for kids to understand.
- nothing
- i really honestly have no idea
- I would focus more on the sermon and scripture readings.
- i would have good up beat music and let people believe what they want to believe.
- Let the people of the church give their input and opinion on what to do to improve the church or to voice their opinions on different things we can do to make it more interesting to others
- HAVE A BAND IN MY CHURCH PLAYING ALONG WITH THE CHOIR ON A WEEKLY BASES
- more youth involement in the service
- I would have more upbeat music and probably a more interesting church service.
- change things like the music get the pepole to respon in the surmen
- sing songs a little bit faster that i
- More upbeat, fun music. I'm not sure.
- nothing Tue, Jan 29, 2008 1:40 PM Find...

- I would clap for the choir, and I would move around a little bit when i'm preaching.
- there wolud only be the fact that I would make the serman shorter
- I would make the sermon shorter
- The sermoons wouldn't be so dry and there would be more music.
- I would pick up the pace of the music that we sing because we just be happy and rejoicful while singing. thats how music makes me feel anyways
- I would make it more interesting, and have the whole congregation do something, and not just listen. Also, I wouldnt read a lot about the history in the bible, but i would take about making you a better person, and give "insperation tips"
- modern day music and have the sermons on teen problems.
- i think i would make it more interesting because i am a very active and visual person i would probably have many participate and get up and dance or something
- SHORTER HYMNS, MORE MODERN SERMONS
- I would change the layout of services in how people sit.
- Have it be more like the worships at camp. Connect with the youth, more music that engages and have the scripture not just read - act it out, use a song to express it, or be more creative!
- I would have a game every week to explain the fun in beliving.
- our pastor and organist has started using more of the newer music and adding a percussion beat to it – I would use more of this, but I know that the older folks

like to hear the music they like also

- More input from the congregation.
- Offer contemporary and traditional elements to appeal to all ages.
- Use more contemporary music, ie U2, other Christian Rock, R&B or soul music
- modern music
- I would change the music they play, make it a little bit more modern christian rock.
- nothing
- I don't know.
- incorporate more humor into the sermon
- more traditional experience
- I actually have that opportunity at my church. At 15 I became part of the youth ministry staff[volunteer] and help plan events, devotions, and retreats. Service projects are a MUST as... how are we drawing more fish for christ if we serve only ourselves or those who are already walking in the Light? Music is highly Important as it grabs the attention and spirit of most youth, ramatic performances are interesting and help some, calm worship services in sanctuary or chapel are just as important. It is important to spend time with other members of the body of Christ wokring together as ministers to the world, each other, and our general environment.
- Make the sermons shorter and more interesting.
- Same as above, and not always have just music out of the hymnals but christian and positive songs on the radio or by real artists to direct the attention to younger

adults.

- I do not really know.I like it as it is.
- i am not sure
- Not much, I like the way in which the service I go to is conducted.
- nothing, i like our service fine,
- nothing needs to change about it at all.
- Have youth participate at least monthly
- I would add a time for the people in the congregsation to share anything good that happened during the week.
- I would make the services more musical
- I don't really know...maybe have the sermons be shorter and have a lot more interaction with the congragation
- More relaxed, everyone take part that wants. Held at different times, not always Sunday morning.
- less preaching, more interaction of the youth
- I would keep everything traditional because I like it the way it is.
- I need to actually think about this. I'll give you an answer in person.
- i would change the number of slow songs that the choir sings and I would have the pastor not preach

APPENDIX C

SURVEY SENT TO ALL OF THE BISHOPS IN THE UNITED STATES

Raw data collect from the survey

1. Are you

Laity 65.0%

Clergy 35.0%

2. How old are you?

<21 0.0%

22-35 15.0%

36-45 17.5%

46-55 20.0%

56-65 32.5%

>65 15.0%

3. Do you think the United Methodist Church is doing a good job teaching children in the church?

Yes 62.5%

No 22.5%

Undecided 15.0%

4. Do you think the United Methodist Church is doing a good job teaching youth in the church?

Yes 40.0%

No 47.5%

Undecided 12.5%

5. Do you think the United Methodist Church is doing a good job teaching the young adults of the Church?

Yes 23.1%

No 61.5%

Undecided 15.4

6. Do you think the United Methodist Church is doing a good job teaching the adults in the church?

Yes 45.0%

No 32.5%

Undecided 22.5%

7. Do you think it's important to memorize Scripture?

Yes 53.8%

No 25.6%

Maybe 20.5%

8. Why is it (or isn't it) important to memorize Scripture?
- To commit scripture to memory is a valuable tool in learning how to find your way around the Bible and understand all it's different components.
 - I used to do this, but can't recall most of them now. It is more important to be reading from Scripture daily for me, but I'll never fault someone who WANTS to memorize Scripture.
 - memorization is a lost art in this culture of texting, etc. Memorization is helpful for the spiritual life
 - Of course, it depends on what we're memorizing. In general, though, memorizing scripture plants important parts of what God wants to say to us in our beings -- makes it easier to meditate.
 - Teaching Scripture should be in the meaning of the words, not just the memorization of the words in such a way that the words - and the lessons they bring - become meaningless.
 - I think it depends on the purpose of such memorization. Memorization can internalize teachings, but it can also be rote and only recited back with out full understanding of the content.
 - It becomes a part of your breathing, it is "at your fingertips"
 - I think it is more important to remember concepts that it is to memorize scripture verses out of context.
 - We are to hide God's word in our hearts, post it on our doors, write it on items that we carry—having Scripture as part of us informs our daily decisions and keeps us grounded.

- For those times when a Bible may not be handy; for comfort; for challenge; for a reminder of who God wants us to be; NOT for verbal abuse or scripture wars
- The only Bible you really own is the one in your head. Key verses should be available always through memorization.
- I'm concerned about people memorizing snapshots that don't tell the full story and are thus taken out of context and abused. On the other hand, it's great to have some key verses memorized that give us strength in hard times.
- What is important is understanding the application of scripture to our lives, so that we can live out our faith, not merely quote scripture for the sake of quoting scripture.
- Learning the bible stories is more important than a verbatim recitation of the verse.
- Memorization just for its own sake is meaningless. Passages such as 23rd Psalm can be a great teaching tool for children
- In times of trouble or despair it is so helpful to have memorized scripture to fall back on as assurances of God's goodness and faithfulness.
- You always have it with you.
- Core to all of United Methodist theology is Scripture. If it is not known, then what do we use?
- Memorization conceals the most important operations: interpretation and deciding how to apply it in life, or [put differently] how you decide to connect to the faith traditions. I put more value in "knowing something by heart" than

knowing some printed text verbatim [an obsession that's obviously peculiar to the era of the printed -book].

- So many different versions of the Bible have changed the well-known portions. I don't think it is important to memorize 500 as did a friend, but some should be on the tip of the tongue.
- Practical application is much more important than rote memorization without any context. Asking people to memorize passages is completely irrelevant if they are given no opportunity for developing their own opportunity for developing their own exegetical understanding of it.
- Understanding the meaning of the scripture is so much more important than memorizing.
- Memorizing Scripture does not guarantee that it will influence actions.
- If you have memorized scripture, you can pull it up and use it as a mantra in hard times.
- Having certain Bible verses memorized allows you to draw comfort from them in times of need or in day to day life. It's easy to memorize song lyrics, why not verses?
- The Bible contains important instructions to God's people regarding things we should do/not do and by memorizing it, it shows it is important to us to abide by His instructions. If we have it memorized we may be more apt to think of that when faced with temptation to part from His ways
- Some scriptures are important to know so we can support Christian ideas & practice

- Although there are key lines I recall, I am comfortable looking up anything I need or want.
- More important to love and support one another, both in and out of the church.
- It is very comforting to be able to pull these up in memory in times of need.
- be familiar with scripture and understand -memorize is not understanding
- I think it's important to understand and remember the scripture, but why memorize (be able to repeat word for word) something that can be easily looked up?
- as long as one gets the message intended I think it is okay
- I believe that one of the ways that God speaks to us is through scripture. He helps bring it to mind when appropriate.
- From time to time it is helpful to be able to recall Bible stories and passages. Times of stress, uncertainty, passages, etc.
- what will you have to lean on with no Bible handy?

9. Do you think it's important to understand and memorize any of the creeds?

(for example the Nicene or Apostle's Creed)

Yes 39.5%

No 10.5%

Maybe 50.0%

10. Why is it (or isn't it) important to understand and memorize the creeds?

- Understanding the creeds (our beliefs) is critical. Recitation of memorized creeds is like "coming home."
- It puts us in touch with the actual tradition that has carried the church.
Certainly as part of confirmation these creeds should be studied and
- these creeds should be studied and memorized as the foundation of what Christianity is founded upon and what church membership has meant and does mean. same as above
- I grew up in a [Baptist] church that didn't use creeds, so I'm OK not memorizing them. But they are a good summary of basic orthodox belief -- and it might be well to have them in memory. On the other side, though, one can be a follower of Jesus' way, have a deep relationship with Jesus Christ and, at the same time, not intellectually believe a number of the points in any of our creeds.
- Again, it is important to understand, but not necessary to memorize them.
- As a youth I was taught the Apostles Creed as part of Confirmation. It stuck with me, but not with all of my peers. But it was also reinforced through other activities in the church as I grew older.
- they become a greater part of you.
- You can then use the historic creeds to write your own personal creed.
- Again - the concept and the reason why we believe these things is more important than memorizing the creeds
- Understanding is critical.
- Memorizing is good.

- it provides a good base to begin to work and think about our faith in a historical context. I prefer the Apostle's Creed or the Creed from the United Church of Canada for memorization and understanding, but the Nicene Creed, the Social Creed, the Korean Creeds and other are helpful
- The Creeds summarize scripture through the Holy Spirit's guidance of the church's interpretation.
- Understand, yes. Memorize, not so much. They are part of our historic
- Christian faith and inform who we are today.
- Understanding the creeds is important, and memorization is less important. The value comes in being able to articulate the beliefs we hold and there is also value in learning about the context in which these creeds came about. People are searching for ways to understand and speak about the great mystery of faith.
- It connects us to our past and reminds us of our basic beliefs
- You memorize it and then it becomes too automatic and you don't think about what you are saying. What did a creed ever do for anybody.
- It help explain what your church believes. But I don't appreciate the changes being made in them.
- Historical tradition of the church allows us to understand context.
- A creed seems always to be an institution's response to a perceived crisis, reifying the ostensibly winning position. I think it's more wise to engage the historic uncertainties and differences of opinion, learning how to be church with differences. Creeds tend to avoid that, and thus fear maturing and

honesty.

- One should know and understand the basic beliefs of the church. There may be opportunities to argue or discuss one's faith with other denominations.
- Although I certainly do not believe memorization is useful, I do think understanding the history and development of the creeds can give people a deeper appreciation and understanding of the rationale behind our beliefs. Studying the creeds often stimulates a desire for deeper knowledge and a more critical eye toward our (all-too-often irrelevant) liturgy.
- Understand, yes. Memorize, no.
- Rote memorization has nothing to do with learning.
- Understanding of the creeds is necessary for the understanding of Christianity and its relevance to our lives.
- It's important to understand the creeds...and to know that a creed is one people's proclamation/belief.
- Memorization isn't as important as concept, unless you truly believe wholly in a creed and it speaks to you (such as scripture.)
- The creeds are a condensed litany of our beliefs. They ground us.
- I believe it is important to understand the creeds-not necessarily memorize them. When we "recite" things in church as a group we should know what we are actually saying-not just blindly reciting what is written in the bulletin or hymnal.
- unsure
- These are common prayers said regularly with the community.

- Projecting it is also welcome.
- Repeating words can replace our mission as Christians
- I'm not sure that it's necessary to repeat specific words to state my beliefs.
- Again as long as one knows what is meant you need not memorize every word
- I don't know much about the creeds.
- need to understand what you are saying

11. Lastly, do you think it's important to sing the 'old time' Methodist hymns?

Rock of Ages, Amazing Grace, hymns in the genre?

Yes 52.6%

No 15.8%

Maybe 31.6%

Why or why not?

- A connection with our roots.
- Probably what I just said about the creeds. I don't begrudge whatever works to help people to worship, but having grown up with these I miss them when we totally ignore them.
- actually need a mixture of old and new
- I do believe it is important to sing our faith; but songs in that genre, or any other, are part of one culture's way of presenting the faith. When they become culturally irrelevant, they should go. New forms need to grow up for new generations, forms that speak poetically and musically in the "mother

tongue" of that generation

- Sure! Old songs or new songs, they all are praises to God.
- Hymns provide a historical context to our tradition and yet also need to speak to the heart of the current generation.
- Some of those hymns are timeless, i.e. amazing Grace, but some are written in vernacular that is difficult to understand today.
- Depends upon the setting--I don't want the traditional hymns to disappear entirely because we need to sing "praise songs" exclusively.
- Postmodernism is not about doing away with tradition but in using traditional elements in ways that speak to participants in an authentic way.
- They provide some sense of history/tradition, but they may not be the most inviting hymns for reaching out to non or nominal Christians so not singing the "old time" hymns exclusively, but at times
- The older hymns that are important summarize key Wesleyan/Methodist teachings.
- As with the creeds, this is part of our heritage and helps define who we are.
But I would also say the music needs to be updated. A good example is a song like "Grace Like Rain"
- I love the old hymns and I also love the newer ones too. Music can reach us in ways that nothing else can... there's great power in music. It's important to continue to learn new hymns as well as the "golden oldies".
- For folks middle age and past they bring back memories. They should, however, not be used solely to the exclusion of praise songs and more

modern hymns. A balance of all types

- I don't mind singing the old hymns, but is it important? NO! If it keeps some from coming into the church because we sing old hymns that mean nothing to them and are not appealing then we need to rethink why they are important to us. If it is just tradition that is not a good enough reason. Does it bring God glory?
- They are part of our heritage.
- Yes, but in a new way.
- They tend to function simultaneously as nostalgia for what some wish we still were, and hindsight of what others have rejected, thus in the singing the differences within a congregation are made poignant in the moment ... but leaders NEVER pastorally acknowledge the contradiction or invite the congregation to engage the moment intentionally to mature together.
- Hymnody is a huge problem because most of the familiar hymns feature poetry and metaphor that reify a very narrow kind of theology to which many United Methodists don't respond.
- These hymns are the ones our faith and beliefs are founded upon.
- Newer songs can be added but the older ones should be kept. Faith and beliefs do not have to be narrow.
- Explore different genres for a solid foundation.
- Are we singing them simply for the purpose of singing? If the hymns are relevant to people in their current context, then yes, it would be important. If there is no bearing from the hymns on modern life, then no. If you are trying

to reach a group of young adults, however, please do not assume they would automatically hate the old hymns.

- Music as a whole is a much less important issue than people would make it out to be. Relevancy in worship will trump musical style each and every time. As a young adult clergywoman, I personally don't care at all what we sing as long as it is relevant to my life. (Additionally, I think it is important to note the dated paternalistic language and often quite violent theology present in many older hymns. Although these concerns are often brushed aside, I have grave concerns about music that glorifies God as only a male, and makes violence out to be a part of God's will.)
- Occasionally using these may be important but music needs to speak to the singers/worshippers. If these do not, they are of no use.
- It is important to know about our church's traditions and history, which include the "old" hymns.
- Absolutely! I know more scripture from hymns than from the Bible. In hard times, I can more easily recall and find comfort in hymns than in a straight Bible verse. Hymns are worship.
- Participating in traditions of the church allow a sense of community with each other and with our ancestors.
- I think that all songs that praise God are equally worthy to be sung in church. Each generation of members have their favorite types of hymns and it is important to make all members and visitors of the church feel welcome. A big way to do that is through the choice of music- it should be a good mix

- depending on the ages preferences of your members.
- even though they're old they still have significance and personally I really like some of the old ones even though I'm not old
- I prefer inclusive text for both the people and use words that represent an all inclusive God in hymn and readings.

12. What do you think Methodists should know about the church in general?

- It is a connectional church.
- Certainly that Christ sent His Spirit to enable the church to carry on the gospel and that we exist in the Spirit when we are intentional about discerning what Christ's Spirit calls us to do. We have the Living Jesus with us to accomplish what He calls us to do.
- The essentials of John Wesley
- understanding of mercy and grace
- Following Jesus is a communal pursuit -- not just individual. Jesus seemed to be more concerned with what we do than what we believe; and more concerned with how we treat the earth and the people around us right now than with whether we "go to heaven" when we die. The Kingdom was, and is, here (and of course also to come).
- Christ's death and resurrection. Anything after that is superfluous.
- Basics of church structure and some level of polity. Local church organization and general church
- the nature of Christ the nature of God basic brushstrokes of history and

tradition

- I think church history from Biblical days to the present gives us ways to understand why we believe what we believe and also the knowledge to be able to intelligently question some of what we believe.
- Great commandments, Great commission, Grace
- Great Commandment and Great Commission; body of Christ; worship, teaching, service, fellowship all a part of church and a faithful life
- They should know it is one, holy, catholic and apostolic. That it is empowered by the Holy Spirit and its mission is to make disciples for the transformation of the world.
- Body of Christ imagery understand Church as a place, as a people, and as an action
- Connectionalism, itineracy, apportionments, along with with church history, sacraments, liturgy, the quadrilateral and mutual accountability.
- How the church is set up. The itinerant system. How the different conferences interact. Basic information. Our congregation has a number of people from other denominations. When you talk about itinerancy, general conferences, bishops, etc., they are lost.
- It is hard for me as laity to separate out what they should know about church versus methodism. They should know that church attendance is a mandatory part of their membership vows along with their gifts, service, prayers, and witness.
- Church membership vows should be taken seriously...it is not a club! It is a

family of faith and all are welcome and all parts of the body are equally important. It is a place to worship, grow, witness and serve. Tithing is not an option.

- That it is a volunteer organization that needs workers and finances in mission as well as a budget to maintain the building and staff. It is comprised of people who are honest and caring and want to spread the message of forgiveness and love of Jesus.
- The general church, throughout time and place, tries to follow God, including the example of Jesus.
- What is the mission (purpose) of the church.
- Basic history of the church, development of the creeds, church's historic role in social justice (both the good and the bad, ie, soup kitchens and the Holocaust),
- multiple manifestations of the church in the world today.
- Methodists should know that the Church is a community of believers in the one true, triune God; Father, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit.
- Who and "what" Jesus is. What it means to be a Christian. What "Grace" means.
- Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors...we are an inclusive congregation.
- Methodists should know and understand the concept of open hearts, open minds, open doors. They should understand church to be a community of believers rather than an institution.
- We need to know enough about the church so that we can speak to people

outside the church about the church without turning them away from the church! We really need to know what the church's purpose is in this world, what we believe in and stand for- Not what we don't believe and and won't stand for.

- what the church supports - i.e. stance on issues such as abortion, gay rights, womens rights and WHY.
- Also what the church believes (trinity etc...) and how the practice of worship in this church differs from other denominations
- What are its beliefs
- what the belief system is-
- Perhaps knowing some of the out reach programs and how people are needed to help out in different capacities in the church (church government, volunteering etc..)
- The church is "of God", but not the only "of God." The church has a long checkered history. The Church is, or should, be concerned about body and soul.

18. What do you think Methodists should know about Methodism?

- It's broad theology.
- Our fascinating history beginning with the Wesleys and how Methodism started in the U.S. and has changed and grown across the globe.
- Began as a movement, not a denomination. God's grace available to ALL. The sacraments are conduits of God's saving grace in us. All are welcome at the

table. It was, and should still be, a movement balanced between work for social justice and time given to the warmed heart.

- Methodists should know more about John Wesley's moment at Aldersgate.

The Wesley

- Quadrilateral should be emphasized and taught.
- Basic history and basic concepts - History - the Wesleys, early Methodism in America, perhaps local church history or history relative to a specific area or annual conference. Concepts - A Wesleyan understanding of Grace, the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, and perhaps an understanding of pluralism and the priesthood of all believers.
- life of Wesley nature of grace the three general rules some sense of our polity
- I think a certain amount of church history is useful and certainly the history is useful and certainly the theology of John Wesley. The Book of Discipline is useful in teaching the basics of Methodism
- Wesleyan understanding of grace (prevenient, justifying, sanctifying);
- Wesleyan Quadrilateral; connectionalism; means of grace (including sacraments); what it means to pledge prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness when joining the church; distinctiveness from Calvinism, Catholicism, Lutheranism, etc.
- That it is connectional, world-wide and episcopal. That we are missional. That we discern God's will in conferences. that we believe in accountability. That we care about personal and social holiness. That we are inclusive.
- Basic history Social Principles Quadrilateral Doctrinal Standards Basic

organization -local church, district, conference, etc. the appointment system of assigning pastors

- Our "family tree" and the denominations who are all now known as United Methodist, as well as AME and CME. Wesley, Otterbein and the means of grace.
- Why, how, and by whom it was founded. Even as a life long Methodist I occasionally have to dig into the Discipline. We don't have to agree but should at least know where our church stand on social principles.
- the quadrilateral: scripture, reason, experience, and tradition (I hope I have that right). We strive to keep the main thing the main thing and that is Jesus Christ. Christ is the only path to salvation and eternal life. He Lives! That pastors are appointed by the bishop and will be reappointed elsewhere sometimes so never join a UMC church because you like the pastor.
- The teachings of John Wesley, the two sacraments, the purpose and understanding of the forms of baptism, the committee structure, and the appointment method for clergy, and taking seriously the promises with church membership.
- Study Wesley's era, and in that historical context consider his perception of needs, constraints, opportunities, decisions, successes and failures. He's an inspiring example to provide a more contemporary anchor, along with Jesus centuries earlier, and other examples.
- What is the historical context of the mission (purpose) of the United Methodist Church.

- History of our parent denominations, historic commitment to social justice and activism, current Methodist theology (by which you would have to include pan-Methodism, unless you are referring to United Methodists alone), major issues facing the church today.
- Methodism was begun by John Wesley as a revival movement within the Anglican church. Methodists believe in justification by faith alone, though grace alone. Methodists are Arminian; we believe that God gives us the freedom to determine whether we will follow him or not.
- Various elements of the Social Principles, basics of the organization of the church and the role of laity in the church.
- John Wesley's basic principles of prayer, gathering and social justice.
- A very general understanding of the Book of Discipline is important – if you are a member of the Methodist church, you should have some idea what the church's beliefs and understandings are. That's not to say that you need to embrace all items within the discipline. If you disagree with or are troubled by certain practices, it is your responsibility to affect change within the church.
- I think we should know the history of how the Methodist church came to be, it's growth, what makes us different from other denominations, our goals/mission both small and large scale.
- not sure what this means...I guess this means how the Methodist religion started? so I guess the highlights so to speak
- The history

- the history and how it developed
- That there can be much more to the church than just coming Sunday morning for an hour. Such as some of the sacraments that we don't usually see in Methodism (anointing, confession etc...)
- Methodism, as I see it, is evangelical, which is to say, it advocates for the Good News (Gospel), as demonstrated in and by Jesus. Methodism, as I see it, has a collective social conscious, which is to say, Methodists build hospitals, schools, orphanages, and other ways to address systemic social injustice

14. What Scriptures do you think should be memorized?

- Begin with Lord's Prayer, Psalm 23, Beatitudes and go from there
- John 3:16; Psalm 23; Ephesians 2:8-10; Galatians 5:22-24; Romans 8:26; whatever is especially meaningful to the individual
- standard scriptures and psalms
- For me, it's more important to memorize in large segments (paragraphs or chapters) than in verses. In that spirit: Psalm 100, Psalm 23, Psalm 22, Isaiah 40, Genesis 1, Exodus 20, John 1, John 17, Matthew 5-7, Ephesians (the whole book), Philippians (the whole book), Luke 2, the passion narrative out of any Gospel.
- Scripture should be learned and deciphered, not just memorized.
- If memorization is considered, perhaps John 3:16, the second half of Matthew 25, Psalm 23, The Great Commission, The Ten Commandments, etc.
- some psalms beatitudes ten commandments some of the words of the prophets I Cor 13, at least parts of this

- A "life verse" is important. The ten commandments, certainly. But things like the beatitudes need background info as to what Jesus truly meant and why he spoke like he did to be able to be truly understood.
- As many as possible
- Shema; Great Commandment; Great Commission; Micah 6:8; Genesis 1:31a; John 1:1-4 among others
- Psalm 23, John 1, John 3, Matthew 25, Great Commission, Great commandments, Luke 15
- John 3:16 Matthew 25 -sheep and goats Matthew 28 - Great Commission
- Matthew 28 - Great Commission John 17 - be one as the father and I are one
Micah 6 - Justice and Mercy Matthew 13 - Great Commandment John 3:16
- I love the 23rd Psalm and that is the first one I memorized, but I am not about to begin to tell people which scriptures are most important to memorize. Some may be more important to certain people depending on their life circumstances. I have been living by "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances for that is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" lately. I think I got that right.
- Genesis 1:1, Psalm 23, Lord's Prayer, 10 Commandments, some knowledge of the Beatitudes, parts of the Easter and Christmas story.
- I reject the question's implicit prooftexting and selectivity that tends to restructure a religion in ways that sanction self. I like the Navigator's sense of reckoning "the whole counsel of scripture," which still obliges the thinking interpreter to make-sense of the contradictions, anachronisms and such.

- At the very least, the Gospel – which gives insight into the teachings of Jesus.
- Why are we memorizing Scripture? Wouldn't a much better use of time be to teach people sound Biblical exegesis so they can study and internalize rather than be able to rote repeat things without context or understanding?
- John 3:16
- I don't think Scriptures should be memorized but I think several should become familiar in their concept.
- Whichever speak closely to the one memorizing them.

15. Is there anything we have forgotten?

- People get discusted with UMC because of the arbitrary way ministers run the local congregations. Until there is a change there, we will continue to loose members in numbers greater than we can replace with new members.
- I think it depends on the particular congregation and the resources available whether there is quality education. In my experience most congregations let the adults teach the adults and some of those teachers are not really theologically sound. It's dangerous. Most congregations don't have the financial resources to have dedicated teaching clergy. Pastors usually preach and shepherd, but aren't always the best teachers or have time to teach well.
- For me, the central issue is: What would Jesus do, think, feel. What would be Jesus' attitude towardT hat's important to me, because I want to be a follower of God in the way of Jesus.
- I really do not know what you are seeking with this question

- All UM's should memorize the United Methodist Way of salvation-- creation, original sin, repentance, justification, assurance, new birth, sanctification and the role played by prevenient, justifying and sanctifying grace and the means of grace. Ecclesiology is important to teach.
- My prayers and best wishes are with you in this effort.
- Respect for the church building as well as respect for cooperation. Running in the church and climbing over the altar are not acceptable.
- Much work can be accomplished with many hands rather than only by individuals. I still like to see people dressed up but it is probably too much to ask these days.
- Something is always forgotten :)
- Please be sensitive to people's own intellectual understand. Memorization may be somewhat (although not very) helpful for children, but if you're reaching youth, young adults, or adults, give them tools instead of just information. People are a lot more intelligent than what we give them credit for. The importance of people understanding that the United Methodist Church is open to any one.
- Can't think of anything.....
- I grew up Methodist and also went to Awana (in a Baptist church) with my best friend for 8 years. Looking back I feel that Awana went overboard in many areas and had a way of making people who did not belong to that church or denomination feel very much like outsiders, however, I thought they did a better job of getting us into the Bible and really developing a

personal relationship with Christ than my Methodist Sunday school did. Sunday school was full of Bible Stories (many Old Testament) that made it hard to grasp the concept that this God of Abraham was my God too. I feel that we really need to educate our children in the Methodist church to know their Bibles and seek a personal relationship with Christ. It is that relationship I had with God (which I give much of the credit to Awana for that) that kept me looking to him during my teenage/college years when I could have really gone off down the wrong road.

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